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THE LITTLE BROTHER.



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BERQUIN'S

CHILDREN'S FRIEND

NEW TRANSLATION IN TWO VOLUMES.



VOL. I.

BOSTON:
MUNROE & FRANCIS.
1846.

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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND has long been out of print. The publishers have therefore been induced to issue an improved edition, that the children of the present generation may have an opportunity of enjoying the same noble and correct sentiments which have so often delighted and instructed their fathers and mothers in their youthful days.

Imitators of the beauties of this work have increased without number ; but none, in the long list, have rivalled or approached the merits of their pattern, the inimitable Arnaud Berquin. We take up his volumes, preserved from our earliest years, with the veneration due to an old friend over whose tales we have wept a thousand times, and expect our children to weep a thousand times to come. All his little dramatic scenes abound with a touching liveliness and pathos, which throw a charm over every admonition, divesting virtue of all austerity, and rendering it enticing. There is a naiveté about many French writers, which renders their productions pleasant on almost all subjects. They never lose their gaiety. This trait abounds in an eminent degree in every tale in the Children's Friend ; in every narrative, however serious, preceptive or grave, the moral is always conveyed in a playful style, suited to youthful taste.

It is well known, that the most honorable prize, offered by the Royal French Academy, for the most useful book for youth, was awarded to M. Berquin for the composition of the Children's Friend.

In order to compress the work into two thick volumes, we have omitted some of the minor pieces which were calculated for older readers, and inserted all the dramas, these last being the most interesting part of the work, and the most pleasing for children.

JANUARY, 1846.

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THE
CHILDREN'S FRIEND.

THE LITTLE BROTHER.

ANNY rose one morning very early, intending to gather some flowers in the garden, and to make a nosegay to carry to her mother, who was then in bed. As she was preparing to go down stairs, Mr. Glassford, her father, entered her chamber, smiling, and took her up in his arms, saying, 'Good morning, my dear Fanny! come with me; I am going to show you something you will be glad to see.'

Fanny eagerly asked, 'What is it, father?'

'God gave you a little brother last night,' answered he.

'A little brother! ah, where is he? Let me see him. Pray carry me to him!'

Her father opened the door of the chamber in which her mother lay. There was beside the bed a strange woman, whom Fanny had never before

seen, who was wrapping up the new-born infant in clothes. Fanny asked a thousand questions, which her father answered as well as he was able; and thought he had satisfied her curiosity in every thing, when she said to him, 'Father, who is that old woman? how she handles my little brother! Are you not afraid she will hurt him?'

Mr. G. O no! never fear. She is a good woman I sent for, to take care of him.

Fanny. But he belongs to mother. Has she seen him yet?

Mrs. G. (*drawing back the curtains of her bed.*) Yes, Fanny, I have seen him. Are you not glad to see him?

Fanny. O indeed I am, mother. You have given me a very pretty young companion! what a cunning little face he has! and all red, as if he had just been running. Father, will you let him play with me?

Mr. G. That is not possible, my dear; he cannot stand upon his little legs. You see how weak they are.

Fanny. O dear! the little legs! I see it will be a long time before we shall run about together.

Mr. G. All in good time. He must first learn to walk; and then both of you will be able to play and jump in the garden.

Fanny. Shall we? O, my poor little fellow; I must give you something to make you fond of me. Hold; I have a little picture in my pocket. There, take that. What is the matter, father? the little

monkey will not have it. He holds his little fists shut.

Mr. G. He knows not how to use them yet. We must wait a few months.

Fanny. Is that the case? aha, my little man, I will give you all my playthings. Well, are you glad of that? answer me. He seems to smile. Call me Fanny. What, won't you speak?

Mr. G. He will not be able to speak these two years. But, Fanny, take care that you do not disturb your mother with too much talk.

Fanny. Ah, father, look there, his face is quite changed; see, he cries; certainly it is because he is hungry. Be quiet, my little man, and I will go and get you something nice.

Mr. G. Don't trouble yourself, my dear, about his victuals. He has no teeth yet. How should he be able to eat?

Fanny. Can't he eat? What will he live on then? Must he die?

Mrs. G. No, my child. God has given me milk in my breast for the nourishment of your little brother. He is very weak as yet; but after some time you shall see how he will tumble about on the floor like a little lamb.

Fanny. How I long to see that! Only look, what a pretty tiny head! I dare not touch it.

Mr. G. You may touch it; but very gently.

Fanny. O, quite gently. O dear! how soft it is! it is like a ball of cotton.

Mr. G. Every little child has such a head as your brother.

Fanny. If he were to fall, he would break it all to pieces.

Mrs. G. Certainly. But we will take good care to hold him, so that he shall not fall.

Mr. G. Do you know, Fanny, that, five years ago, you were as little as he is ?

F. As little as he ! O, father, you are joking.

Mr. G. No, my dear ; nothing is more true.

Fanny. I do not remember it.

Mr. G. Do you remember when I had this carpet put on the floor ?

Fanny. Why, it has always been there.

Mr. G. No. I had this carpet laid down at the very time when you were as little as your brother.

Fanny. Indeed ! then I never took notice of it.

Mr. G. Little babies never take notice of what passes. When your brother shall be as old as you, ask him if he remembers that you tried to-day to make him learn to pronounce your name. You will then see if he recollects it.

Fanny. What, and did I nurse at mother's breast too ?

Mr. G. Certainly. You don't know all the pains she has taken for you ! In the first place, you were so weak that you could scarce take any nourishment. We were afraid every moment that you would die. Your mother used to say, ' My poor infant ! if she should fall into a fit ! ' And,

believe me, she took infinite pains to get you to suck a few drops of milk.

Fanny. Ah, dear mother ! it was you then that taught me to feed myself ?

Mr. G. Yes, my child. After your mother had succeeded in making you take to the breast, you grew stout and good-humored. Such were her cares for nearly two years, every day and every hour of the day. Sometimes when your mother had through fatigue fallen asleep, you would disturb her rest with your cries. Then she was obliged to run to your cradle. ' My dear Fanny,' she would say, while she endeavored to quiet you, ' surely you must be thirsty ;' and then she would take you to her bosom.

Fanny. And was my head at that time as soft as my brother's ?

Mr. G. Just the same, my dear.

Fanny. What, mine ! that's so hard at present ! O dear, I must have broken it a thousand times.

Mr. G. Ah, my child, we took much care of you. Your mother for a time renounced every pleasure, and kept from all company, on purpose not to lose you a moment from her sight. As often as business, that was absolutely indispensable, obliged her to go out, she was in continual fear for you. ' My dear Grace,' she would say to your nurse, ' I give Fanny into your care, to look to her as if she was your own child ;' and she was continually making the good woman presents, to induce her to take particular care of you.

Fanny. My dear good mother ! But was there ever a time, father, when I could not run ? I that can run so well now. See ; in three or four steps I am across the room. Who taught me this ?

Mr. G. Your mother and I. We put a bandage of velvet well stuffed about your head, that, if you happened to fall, you might not hurt yourself. We then held you by leading-strings, to assist your first attempts in walking ; and every day we went into the garden upon the grass-plat, where, placing ourselves opposite to each other at a little distance, we put you down standing all alone betwixt us, and held out our arms to invite you to come, sometimes to one, and sometimes to the other. Your slightest stumble made our blood run cold. It was by repeating these trials that we taught you to walk.

Fanny. I never have thought that I gave you so much trouble. Was it you too that taught me to speak ?

Mr. G. Yes ; for that you are indebted to us. I used to take you upon my knee, and repeat the words father and mother, until you were able to lisp them. Every word, that you this day speak, we taught you in the same manner. I dare say you can recollect, that it was we who showed you how to read.

Fanny. O, I remember that perfectly. You placed me every day at dinner between you ; and, at the dessert, a plate of raisins was set upon the table, and some small squares marked with the letters. Whenever I named them rightly, you al-

ways gave me some raisins. O, it was a very pretty play.

Mr. G. If we had not taken pains with you, and had left you to yourself, what would have become of you ?

Fanny. I should have been dead long ago. Dear good father and mother !

Mr. G. And yet you sometimes vex your father ; and are sometimes disobedient to your mother.

F. I will never be so any more, as long as I live. I did not know how much you had done for me.

Mr. G. Take notice of the attention we shall give to your little brother, and then think, ' I too have given my parents the same trouble.'

This conversation made a lively impression upon Fanny. When she saw the tenderness, which her mother testified for her little brother ; all the anxiety, that she felt for his health ; the patience she exerted in endeavoring to make him take his nourishment ; how much she was afflicted whenever she heard him cry ; with what tender solicitude her father relieved her of some part of her fatigue ; and how they both took infinite pains in teaching the infant to walk and speak and read ; she would say in her own mind, ' My dear parents have taken the same trouble with me !' This reflection inspired her with so much affection and gratitude, that she ever after faithfully observed the promise she had made, never voluntarily to cause them the slightest uneasiness.



LITTLE JACK.

MR. CHURCHILL was returning home one day on horseback, after taking a ride about his estate. As he passed the wall of a burial-ground belonging to a small village, he heard the cries of some one on the other side. This worthy man had the heart not to hesitate a moment in going to the relief of the unfortunate person. He alighted; and, giving his horse to the servant who followed him, sprang over the enclosure of the burial place. Standing on

tiptoe, and looking round, he perceived in a corner, at the farthest end, a grave, covered with earth that was quite fresh. Upon this grave lay, at his full length, a child, about five years old, who was weeping. Mr. Churchill approached him with looks of kindness, and said to him, 'What do you here, my little friend ?'

Child. I am calling my mother. They laid her here yesterday, and she does not get up.

Mr. C. That is because she is dead, my poor boy.

Child. Yes, they say she is dead, but I cannot believe it ; she was so well the other day, when she left me with Susan our neighbor. She told me she was to come back, but she does not come. My father is gone away too, and my little brother, and now the other little boys of the town won't have me.

Mr. C. Won't have you ? Why so ?

Child. I don't know ; but, when I want to go with them, they drive me away, and leave me by myself. And they say naughty things about my father and mother. That is what grieves me most of all. O, mother, get up, get up !

Mr. Churchill's eyes filled with tears. 'You say, that your father has gone away, and your brother too ; where have they gone ?'

Child. I don't know where my father is ; and my little brother went away yesterday to another town. There came a gentleman all in black, just like our parson, and took him away.

Mr. C. And where do you live now ?

Child. With our neighbor Susan. I am to stay there until my mother comes back, as she promised me. I love my other mammy Susan very well ; but (*pointing to the grave*) I love my mammy that lies there a great deal better. O mother, mother ! why do you lie so long ? when will you get up ?

Mr. C. My poor child, you call her in vain, for you will never awaken her.

Child. Well, then, I will lie down here and sleep by her. I saw her when they put her into a great chest to carry her away. O, how white she was ! and how cold ! I will lie down here and sleep by her.

Mr. Churchill could no longer refrain from tears. He stooped down, took the child in his arms, and kissing him, tenderly said, 'What is your name, my poor little fellow ?'

Child. They call me Jacky, when I am good ; and when I am a bad boy, they call me, 'You Jack.'

Mr. Churchill smiled at this answer. 'Will you take me to Susan ?' 'O yes, yes, sir,' answered the child ; and, running before *Mr. Churchill* as fast as his little legs could go, conducted him to her door.

Susan was not a little surprised to see a gentleman enter her cottage with little Jack. The child, pointing to her, and running to hide his face in her lap, said, 'This is she ; this is my other mammy.' She knew not what to think of so extraordinary a visit. *Mr. Churchill*, however, did not leave her long in suspense. He told her of the situation in which he found the child, and the compassion he felt for him ; and requested her to favor him with

information concerning the parents of little Jack. Susan desired him to be seated, and began thus—

‘The father of this child is a shoemaker, whose house joins mine. He is an honest, sober, laborious man, under thirty, and a comely person. His wife was a handsome woman, but in poor health. Withal she was very careful, and a good housewife. They were married about seven years ago, lived affectionately together, and would have made the happiest couple in the world, if their worldly affairs had been more prosperous. John had nothing but his trade; and Margaret, left an orphan, brought her husband only a little money that she had saved in the service of a worthy clergyman, the curate of the next parish. This little sum was laid out in buying a bed, and a few other articles of household furniture, with a small stock of leather for his work. In spite of this poverty, they contrived to maintain themselves during the first years of their marriage, by dint of labor and good management. But children came, and then began their difficulties. Yet still they might have supported their growing family, if misfortunes had not happened.

‘Poor Margaret, who had worked in the fields every day during the hay time, to bring home some money at night for her husband, fell sick from fatigue, and continued so all the harvest, and all the winter. Physic is very expensive, besides which the work did not go on so well, because John’s customers left him one by one, as they were

afraid of being neglected or ill-served in a house where there was a sick wife.

'At last Margaret's health grew better, but her husband's business had declined. He was obliged to borrow money to pay the apothecary; and, having lost all his customers, he was now quite out of work. At the same time Margaret could earn nothing; her strength was so much reduced that nobody would give her employment.. The rent of their house, and the interest of the money that they had borrowed, came heavily upon them. They were more than once obliged to suffer hunger, and thought themselves very happy when they had a morsel of bread to give to their children.'

At these words, little Jack withdrew into a corner of the room, and began to sob.

'With all these misfortunes, it happened that their hard-hearted landlord, finding that they were unable to pay the rent of the two winter quarters, threatened to put John in jail. They begged hard of him to have patience until the hay-making time came on, because then they could earn something by working in the fields; but neither their entreaties nor their tears could soften him, although he is the richest man in the town. It was with much ado that he allowed them a month's delay; but he said, that if, at the end of that time, he was not paid the whole, he would sell their furniture, and put John in prison.

'The family were now a picture of melancholy and patient distress, and a sight of them was capa-

ble of softening a heart of stone. Believe me, sir, I have often been grieved to the soul at hearing the complaints of these good neighbors, whilst unable to relieve them. I went once myself to their landlord, and prayed him to have compassion on their extreme sufferings. I offered to pawn to him all that I possessed in the world. But it was to no purpose. 'You are no better than they are,' answered he; 'this it is to have such trash of tenants as you are all together.' Ah, sir, (*here the tears trickled down Susan's cheeks,*) I bore this reproach patiently, that I might not provoke him more; but O, how I suffered in being nothing but a poor widow, unable to afford the least comfort to those worthy people! How much good might the rich do, if they only had the same inclination as the poor!

'But to return to my unfortunate neighbors. I advised Margaret to make known her distress to the clergyman, with whom she had lived several years as an honest and worthy servant, and to beg of him to advance her some money. She answered, that she would speak about it to her husband; but that she could hardly think of this expedient, because the curate might imagine they were reduced to want through their own bad management. Three days ago she brought me her two children, as she used to do, and begged me to take care of them till the evening. She intended to go to a neighboring village, and try if she could procure some hemp to spin from a weaver, in order to pay her debt. She could never reconcile herself to applying to the cler-

gyman, her old master ; but her husband was to go in her stead, and he had set off the same day.

‘I took charge of the children with pleasure, as I had known and loved them from their birth. Margaret, as she was going away, clasped them to her breast and kissed them, as if it were with a presentiment that it was the last time she should see them on earth. Her eyes were swimming in tears, as she said to the eldest, ‘Jacky, I shall be back very soon, and then I’ll carry you home.’ She took me by the hand, thanked me for being so good to her children, kissed them once more, and departed. A little while afterwards, I heard a noise in her house, like something falling ; but, thinking that she was gone, I supposed it might be nothing but the inner door shut by the wind, and thought no more about it.

‘The evening came, it grew dark, and I saw nothing of my neighbor. I thought I would go to the house, and see if she might not have returned and gone in with her load of hemp, previous to coming for the children. I found the door open, and went in. But O, how was I surprised and shocked at beholding Margaret dead, stretched at full length at the foot of the stairs ! I stood motionless at first, not knowing what to do. At length, after trying in vain to recover her, I ran for the surgeon, who, feeling her pulse, shook his head, and sent directly for the coroner. They held an inquest, the surgeon attending, to ascertain the cause of her death ; and they reported, that

she must have died suddenly, or that, having fallen in a fit, and unable to call for assistance, she had expired in that condition.

‘I can easily imagine how it happened. She had returned to her house to ascend the loft for the bag that was to hold her hemp, and, as her eyes were still dim with tears, she had missed a step in coming down, and fallen from the top of the stairs head foremost to the floor at the bottom. The bag that was beside her seemed to be a proof of this ; yet the coroner thought otherwise. The body was ordered to be buried next morning before daylight, in a corner of the churchyard, and an enquiry ordered to be made to find John. I proposed to the parish officers to keep the two children myself ; for, although I find it hard enough to live, yet, thought I, the bounteous God knows that I am a helpless widow, and will surely assist me to feed them. The younger boy did not long stay with me.

‘Yesterday, soon after Margaret’s burial, her old master, the worthy curate, accidentally called to see her. He knocked for some time at her door, and as nobody opened, he came to my window, and asked me what had become of John Johnson the shoemaker. I answered that if he would step in for a moment, I had many things to tell him. He came in, and I told him all that had happened, which made him shed tears. Afterwards I told him that John had concluded to apply to him in his distress. He seemed surprised, and assured me he had not seen him. The two children went

up to him, and he fondled them a good deal. Little Jack asked him if he could not awake his mother, who had been a long time asleep. The tears came into the good curate's eyes when he heard the child talk in this manner ; and he said to me, ' Good woman, I will send for these two little boys to-morrow, and I will keep them at my house. If their father returns, and should be able to support them, I shall restore them to him whenever he requires it. In the mean time I will take charge of their education.'

' This plan was not very agreeable to me ; for I love these little innocents as if I were their mother, and it would have given me some pain to see them taken from me so soon. ' Doctor,' said I to him, ' I cannot consent to part with the children. They have a regard for me, and I for them.'

' Well then, my good woman,' said the curate, ' you must give me one boy, and I will leave you the other, since he is likely to be happy ; and, from time to time, I will send you something for his maintenance.'

' I could not refuse the good parson this benevolent request. And he asked little Jack if he should like to go with him. ' What, where my mother is ?' said Jack ; ' Yes, sir, I will go.'

' No, my little man, I do not mean there ; but to my handsome house, and my handsome garden.'

' No, no, let me stay here with Susan. I'll go every day where my mother is. I would rather go there than to your handsome garden.'

‘The good gentleman did not wish further to trouble the child, who had gone to hide himself behind the curtains of my bed. But he told me that he would send for the youngest, who would require more care than the other ; and at his departure, he left some money.’

‘This, sir, is all that I know about the parents of little Jack. What causes me uneasiness at present is, that John does not return ; and that a report has circulated, that he has gone to join a gang of smugglers, and that his wife killed herself for grief. These stories have been so busily spread in the village, that even the children repeat them ; and whenever my poor Jack wishes to go among the boys, they are ready to beat him, and drive him away. The poor child is now quite dull, and never stirs abroad, except to his mother’s grave.’

Mr. Churchill listened in silence to Susan’s narrative, and was much affected by it. Little Jack came again close to her side. He looked at her with fondness, and several times called her mother. At length Mr. Churchill said to Susan, ‘My worthy woman, you have conducted yourself very generously towards this unfortunate family. God will not fail to reward you for it.’

Susan. I have done no more than my duty. We are sent into this world to assist and relieve each other. I have ever thought, that I could do nothing more pleasing in the sight of God, as a small return for all the blessings that I have recei-

ved from him, than to comfort my poor neighbors to the utmost of my power. O, that I could have done more than I did ! But I am possessed of nothing in the world but my cottage, a little garden where I raise a few greens, and what little money I can earn by the work of my hands. Nevertheless, during eight years that I have been a widow, God has given me an honest support, and I hope will do so while I live.

Mr.C. But if you retain this child, the expense of maintaining him, till he is capable of earning his bread, may be inconvenient to you.

Susan. I shall take care not to let him suffer. We will share even to my last morsel of food.

Mr.C. And how are you to furnish clothes for him?

Susan. I leave the care of that to him who clothes the fields with grass, and the trees with green leaves. He has given me fingers, which sew and spin ; they shall work to clothe this poor little orphan. Who-soever can pray and work, will never want.

Mr.C. Then you are resolved to keep little Jack with yourself ?

Susan. Yes, sir ; I could not live under the thought of sending away this destitute infant, nor of letting him come upon the parish.

Mr.C. You are, I suppose, related to his family ?

Susan. Not otherwise than as neighbors and fellow-christians.

Mr.C. Then, as I am also related to both of you by religion and humanity, I will not suffer you alone to have all the honor of doing good to this or-

phan, since God has provided me with means more ample than yours. Commit the education of little Jack to my care ; and, since you are attached to each other, and since your benevolence merits my esteem as much as the child's affection for his mother, I will take you both home with me and provide for you. Sell your garden and cottage, and come live at my house ; there you shall have a comfortable support, and a home for the rest of your life.

Susan. (*looking at him with gratitude.*) Do not be angry with me, sir. May God reward you for all your goodness ; but I cannot accept your offer.

Mr. C. And why not ?

Susan. I am fond, sir, of the spot where I was born, and where I have lived so long ; then again I could not suit myself to the bustle in a great house, nor to the sight of many folks in a family. Nor am I used to ease, and nice living. I should fall sick, if I had nothing to do, or if I eat finer food than ordinary. Let me abide in my cottage with little Jack. It will do him no harm to fare a little hard. If you choose to send him now and then a small matter, to pay for his schooling, and to furnish him with tools for whatever trade he may learn, the gracious God will pay you an hundred fold ; at least this boy and I will pray to him daily for you. I have no child ; he shall be instead of one to me ; and what little I possess shall belong to him, whenever it pleases the Lord to call me to himself.

Mr. C. Well then, be it so. I do not wish that

what I intended for your good should render you unhappy. I will leave little Jack with you since you are so well together. Talk to him often about me, and tell him that I am in the place of a father to him : while you, on the other hand, will take upon you the cares and name of the mother for whom he grieves so much. I shall every month send you what may be sufficient for your subsistence. I will call frequently to see you, and my visits shall be for your own as well as his welfare.

Susan lifted her eyes towards heaven, and implored its favors on Mr. Churchill. She then said to the child, 'Come hither, Jack, and ask this gentleman's blessing ; he will be your father now.' The little boy did so, but said presently to Susan, 'How can he be my father ? he wears no apron.'

Mr. Churchill smiled at this innocent question of little Jack ; and, throwing his purse on the table, 'Farewell,' said he, 'generous Susan ;—farewell, my little friend ;—it shall not be long before you see me again.' He then mounted his horse, and took the road that led to the parish where the curate lived who had taken home the younger orphan. He found the curate reading a letter. After the first civilities, Mr. Churchill explained the object of his visit to the worthy divine, and asked him if he had gained any information concerning the father of these unfortunate children.

Curate. I have just received this letter, written by him to his wife. It was inclosed in one to me. He requests me to deliver it to her, and console

her for his absence. As she is dead, I have thought it necessary to open the letter addressed to her. Here it is ; please to read it.

Mr. Churchill took the letter, and read as follows.

‘ Dear wife,

‘ I cannot, without sorrow, think of the trouble that my absence must have occasioned you. But let me inform you of what has happened. On my way to the clergyman’s house, I began to think in this manner : ‘ Of what use will it be for me thus to go a begging ? I shall only get rid of one debt by contracting another ; and shall gain nothing but the uneasiness of thinking to pay it. I, who am yet young and can work, to go and ask for so much money ! I shall be either taken for an idle fellow or an intemperate one. The parson, to be sure, married us, and loves us like his children ; but, if he were to take a dislike, and refuse me ! or, on the other hand, as he is not wealthy, if he were not able to relieve us ! and then, supposing that he advanced me the sum for a year, should I be sure to have it in my power to pay him ? And if not, should not I be as bad as a thief ? It would be defrauding this good man.’ Thus I reasoned, my dear Margaret ; and I began afterwards to think how I might extricate our affairs, by acting in a just and fair manner. I often sighed, and put up my prayers to heaven. At last the thought came into my head, and I said to myself, ‘ You are still a young man ; you are stout and able-bodied ; what harm would there be if you went on board a

man-of-war for a few years ? You can read and write, and cast accounts pretty well ; you may still make a fortune for your wife and children ; you may, at least, clear yourself of debt. Consider that, if you have good success, and happen on some prize money, it will bring riches and happiness to your family.' For about half an hour these were my thoughts, when I saw part of a press-gang at a distance behind me. They soon overtook me, asked me whence I came, where I was bound, and whether I would enlist as a volunteer ? I pretended not to like the sea ; but they questioned me again, and offered a bounty of five pounds. I told them that for so much I would serve during the war. ' Done,' said they. ' Come along with us, my lad, and the affair shall be settled presently.' They brought me before the lieutenant, who asked me some questions, which I answered so much to his satisfaction, that he paid the bounty immediately. And thus, my dear Margaret, I have entered the king's service to clear my affairs. I send you a draft for the five pounds. I would not keep a penny of it. Pay the forty shillings that we owe, and whatsoever else may be due. With the remainder do the best you can to keep house. Live well, that you may recover your strength. Clothe our children, and send them soon to school. I know, that, though you are handy and careful, you will not be able to make this sum last very long. My wages are ten dollars a month ; I will try to find a way to forward them occasionally ; and,

whenever we arrive in harbor, I shall ask leave to go on shore to see you. My dear Margaret, do not grieve ; trust in God. We may soon have a peace. I will then return to you, and we shall begin housekeeping together once more. My lieutenant has promised me to write to our churchwardens, that the parish may not be uneasy on my account. Bring up our children carefully ; make them fond of home, and fond of work. Pray with them every day, and teach them their duty, that they may grow up to be honest men ; for you are very capable of instructing them well. Live in the fear of the Lord, pray to him for me, and I will pray to him on your behalf. Answer me soon. You have only to give your letter to the curate, he knows best how to direct it. Remember me to the two boys. Tell Jack, that, if he is a good boy, I will bring him something at my return. God be praised for all things. Continue still to love me, who remain

‘ Your ever faithful husband,

JOHN JOHNSON.’

Mr. Churchill’s eyes were filled with tears while he read this letter. When he had finished it, he exclaimed, ‘ This man may truly be called a good husband, a good father, and an honest man. Sir, there is real pleasure in contributing to the happiness of such excellent people. As to John’s debts, I will pay them ; and will enable him to follow his trade decently. Let this money remain for the children, who have cost their father dear ; and let it be divided between them, as soon as they are ca-

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pable of doing business for themselves. Till then, keep it in your own hands, and speak to them of it at times, as the strongest proof of their father's affection. I will pay you interest for it, to be joined with the capital ; for I wish to make the deposit a sacred one.'

The worthy curate was too much affected to answer Mr. Churchill. The latter understood the force of his silence, and, pressing him by the hand, took his leave.

All Mr. Churchill's designs in favor of John have been realized. John Johnson, now safely returned home, enjoys easy circumstances and is in a prosperous condition, and would be one of the happiest of men, but for his grief at the loss of Margaret. He finds no other comfort, than in talking about her with Susan. This worthy woman considers herself as his sister, and as a mother to his children. Little Jack never lets a day pass without going to his mother's grave. He has made such good use of Mr. Churchill's generosity, by improving himself, that this good gentleman has it in view to establish him in the most advantageous manner. Mr. C. has taken like care of John's younger son ; and he never mounts his horse without recalling to mind the affecting incident of Little Jack. Whenever he encounters any subject of chagrin, he visits the abodes of the persons he has made happy, and always returns home with a tranquillized mind, relieved of every uneasy sensation.

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A GOOD HEART COMPENSATES FOR MANY INDISCRETIONS.

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS.

MR. VAUGHAN.

MARY ANNE, *his Daughter.*

DOROTHEA, *his Niece.*

FREDERICK, *his Nephew.*

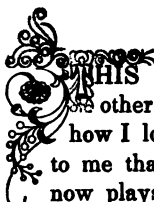
PETER, *an old Coachman.*

SERVANT.

SCENE. *An apartment in Mr. Vaughan's Country-House.*

SCENE I.

Mr. Vaughan.



THIS is what we gain by taking care of other people's children! This Frederick, how I loved him! he was, I believe, dearer to me than my own son, and the scapegrace now plays these pranks! How could he so change from what he was in infancy! Such goodness of heart, such spirit, such cheerfulness! The courage of a lion, and the mildness of a lamb! We could not help loving him. But let him never appear before me again. I will not hear him mentioned.

Enter Dorothea.

Dor. Did you send for me, uncle?

Mr. V. I have fine news for you, concerning your rogue of a brother.

Dor. Concerning Frederick ?

Mr. V. There, read that letter from Richard ; or I will read it to you myself. (*Reads.*)

‘ Dear father,—I am sorry to have none but disagreeable news for you ; however, it is better for you to receive it from me than from another. Our dear Frederick,’——(O yes ! he deserves that affectionate name now.)——‘ Our dear Frederick goes on very indifferently. He sold his watch some days ago, and, what is still worse, most of his school-books and books of devotion. I will tell you how I came to know it. I asked, the other day, at a shop of second-hand books, for the ‘ Whole Duty of Man ;’ for, as I had worn out mine own by often reading it, I thought I could do no better than purchase another. The bookseller showed me one, which I knew immediately to be Frederick’s, as his name was upon the title-page. I bought it for a shilling, but said nothing about it, for fear of prejudicing our schoolfellows against him. I contented myself with showing it to the head master, who sent for the bookseller, and asked from whom he had that book. The bookseller confessed that he bought it of my cousin, and Frederick could not deny it, but said that he sold it because he wanted money ; and that, until he should be able to buy another, he had borrowed one from a friend who had two copies. The head-master asked him what he had done with his mon-

ey, and Frederick told him, though I suspect his account to be all a fib! O, thought I to myself, we must find if he have not parted with some of his necessaries too. I thought first of the watch, that you gave him for his new-year's gift, to let him see how his time went, which was a matter that he minded very little, as you may remember. I asked him what o'clock it was? He seemed confused, and told me his watch was at the watchmaker's. In order to be certain, I went thither that moment. There was not a word of truth in the whole story. I expostulated with him, as an affectionate cousin ought to do; but he answered me, that it was no concern of mine, and that his watch, as he parted with it, was much more usefully employed than in his fob, as he had occasion no longer to know the hour for his business. Who knows what he may have done that was still worse? for one cannot guess the whole?—Well, what do you say to this, Dorothea?

Dor. Dear uncle, I own I am as much displeased at my brother as you are. Yet——

Mr. V. A little patience! This is not all. The best of the story is to come. (*Reads.*)

‘Only hear what he has done since. The day before yesterday, he went out in the afternoon without leave. Evening came on; he did not return. Supper bell rang; he was not to be found. In short, he staid out the whole night, and did not come in till the next morning. You may imagine how he was received. The master asked him

where he had been ; but he had invented all his answers beforehand. And, even though all which he said were true, he is to appear this evening before all the masters. If they do him justice, he will be expelled shamefully, or at least sent home. What afflicts me the most is his ingratitude for all kindness, the disgrace which he brings upon us, and the irregular way of life which he follows. I cannot believe that he told the truth, in speaking of the place where he spent the night.'——(And why do you not mention it ?)——' But I wish that he may. It would be still worse, and would only increase your resentment. He threatens now to run away, and go home.'

Mr. V. Yes, yes, let him come home ! let him only set his foot upon my threshold ! he will see the consequence. Let him go where he spends his nights. Dorothea, I desire you never to speak a word to me in his favor. They may put him in prison, send him home, or expel him ignominiously ; it is all one to me. I shall never concern myself about him. He may go to some seaport, and ship himself as cabin boy. I have used him as a son too-long.

Dor. True, my dear uncle, you have been as a father to us ; and even our own parents could not have shown more care and kindness to us.

Mr. V. I have done it with pleasure, and take no merit to myself for it. Your mother, while I was abroad on my travels, did the same for my

children. It doubly became my duty, and I never to this day declined it ; but——

Dor. If my brother has forgotten himself for a moment, it is owing to his impetuous temper. You have had him long under your eye. Whenever he has committed an error, his repentance and sorrow for offending you have always exceeded the offence.

Mr. V. Well, and how many of his indiscretions have I not pardoned. When he burnt his eyebrows and hair with his fire-works ; when he threw a stone through our neighbor's window, and broke a large splendid looking-glass ; when he fell into the mire, spoilt a new suit of clothes ; when he overturned the handsomest carriage I ever had ; did not I forgive him all this ? I attributed these mischievous freaks to a petulance which did not as yet show a bad disposition. But to sell his watch and his books ; to leave school of nights, and sleep out contrary to rule ; to rebel against his masters ; and still have the face to think of coming home to me !—

Dor. My dear uncle, be pleased first to hear what he can say in justification of his conduct.

Mr. V. Hear *him* ? Heaven forbid that I should even see him again. I shall tell all my tenants to receive him with a good stick, if he offers to come among them.

Dor. Ah, no ! Your heart could never consent to such harshness. You will not deny the request of a niece who loves and honors you as her father.

Mr. V. You will see whether that will be difficult.

Dor. Will you have me think then, that you no

longer reverence the memory of your sister ? and that you no longer love me ?

Mr. V. Love you ? I have no fault to find with you. Your brother's misbehavior shall not alter my sentiments towards you. But, if you love me, do not tease me with any more solicitations. Study only to live happy in my presence.

Dor. How can I live happy, while I see my brother in disgrace ?

Mr. V. He deserves it but too well. Why not tell what he did with the money, and where he slept ?

Dor. It appears from the letter, that he confessed both. It is Richard only who will not believe him. [*Looks at Mr. Vaughan, with tears in her eyes.*] Ah, dear uncle——

Mr. V. Well, he shall have one chance more, on your account. I will wait for the master's letter.

Enter Servant.

Ser. A messenger, sir, would speak with you.

Mr. V. What has he brought ?

Ser. A letter from the school. [*delivers the letter.*]

Mr. V. Right. I was waiting for this. It comes from the head master. I know his hand. Where is the messenger ? let him wait for my answer.

Ser. Shall I show him up, sir ?

Mr. V. No ; I will go down. I wish to inform myself from his own mouth.

[*Mr. Vaughan goes out. Dorothea following him, the servant makes a sign to her to stop.*]

Ser. Miss Dorothea, if you please !

Dor. What have you to say ?



Ser. Master Frederick is here.

Dor. My brother ?

Ser. If he be not come, he is not far off.

Dor. Who told you so ?

Ser. The messenger, who overtook him on the road. Ah, miss, what has master Frederick done ?

Dor. Nothing 'unworthy. Do not believe him capable of it.

Ser. I never thought so of him. We all loved him, and would have given our lives for him. He was liberal to us for the least service we could do him. He spoke for us to your uncle whenever he was in a passion with us ; and he was a friend to

all the poor people in the neighborhood. I wonder his schoolmaster could be angry with him. I see how it is. They were going to punish him for some prank, and he, being a fine spirited young man, would not be roughly handled.

Dor. Where did the messenger find him ?

Ser. About a mile off. He was sleeping under a willow on the bank of a little brook.

Dor. My poor brother !

Ser. The man stopped till he awoke. You can think how surprised Frederick was on seeing him. He imagined that this man had been sent to apprehend him ; and he told him he would sooner be torn in pieces than submit.

Dor. Ah, I know his stout, resolute way.

Ser. The messenger protested that he had such a regard for him, that, if he were sure to be scolded or even lose his place for it, he would not molest him. He then told his message, and how he was spoken of at school.

Dor. What did my brother resolve to do ?

Ser. Although worn out with fatigue, he walked on by the messenger's side, till they came to the edge of our grove. Frederick struck in there, to hide himself in the grotto ; and there he will stay for the messenger's return, to know how your uncle will take matters.

Dor. O if I could speak to him !

Ser. Probably he wishes it as much as you do.

Dor. My uncle often walks that way. If he should meet him in his anger ! Be so kind as to

ran and tell him to hide himself in the barn behind the trusses of hay. I will go to him as soon as my uncle goes out to walk.

Ser. Never fear, miss ; I will take him there myself, and help him to hide. *[Exit.*

Dor. What trouble he continually causes me ! yet I cannot help loving him.

Enter Mary Anne.

Dor. Ah, dear cousin, how I longed to speak with you ! and yet, alas, I have but very bad news.

Mary. I know the whole. My father just now gave me my brother's letter to read. That which he has received from the schoolmaster has redoubled his anger against Frederick.

Dor. I know not by what method I shall endeavor to justify him.

Mary. I venture to say he is innocent. Don't you know Richard's hypocrisy ? He commits all the faults, and is artful enough to lay the blame upon others. This is not the first instance of his endeavoring to injure your brother in my father's opinion. Twenty times has he, by underhand complaints, had him almost turned out of the house ; and then, when all has been cleared up, he himself has been discovered to be the only person in fault. I see, from his own letter, that he is an asperser, and that Frederick, at worst, has only been imprudent.

Dor. What consolation your kindness affords me ! Yes, my brother is naturally well inclined, sincere, generous, unsuspecting ; but he is also petulant,

daring, and inconsiderate. He is headstrong in his resolutions, and lacks respect for those who do not coincide with him in his humor.

Mary. And Richard is envious, hypocritical, dissembling, and fawning. Like a cat, that first gives a paw soft as velvet, and afterwards strikes with her talons when least suspected. How willingly would I exchange my brother, with all his pretended virtues, for your's 'with all his imperfections on his head.' The worst is, that Frederick is not here.

Dor. What if I should say he were ?

Mary. Where is he ? Let me run to him. I long to see him.

Dor. Hush ! I think I hear my uncle, talking to himself.

Mary. Well, you are Frederick's sister ; it is but right that you should see him first. I will stay here with my father, and try to soften him. Do you run to the poor wanderer, and give him some words of comfort and hope——

Dor. Yes, and a good lecture besides ; for he deserves it, at all events. *[Exit.*

SCENE II. *Mr. Vaughan, Mary Anne.*

Mr. V. I am so provoked with this boy that I have not been able to write an answer back. However, the messenger may stay here till to-morrow morning. Let me compose myself a little.

Mary. How, father ! are you still angry with my poor cousin ? Is his crime so very great ?

Mr. V. It becomes you well to plead in his favor !

I see that your head is no better than his, and you would have done worse perhaps in his place. Yet you both have a good example before you.

Mary. Who is that ?

Mr. V. My good boy, Richard.

Ma. O yes ; my brother is a boy of great veracity indeed ! very generous ! he is a pretty pattern !

Mr. V. I know that Dolly and you are no friends to him. I myself, from your opinions of him, had conceived a prejudice against him ; but his master gives me a good account of him to-day.

Mary. Nay, did not all his masters quite sicken you here with his praises ! They knew his father's wealth ; and people often hope to wheedle presents from a father by flattering him about his son.

Mr. V. I grant that they flattered me a little with regard to him ; but, from his earliest childhood, he has never played one prank for a hundred irregularities committed by Frederick.

Mary. Frederick's pranks never hurt any one but himself.

Mr. V. Did he hurt nobody but himself when he overturned my chariot ? A carriage elegantly gilt and quite new, that cost me two hundred pounds !

Mary. That was an accident ; imprudence is pardonable at his age. Peter was trying the carriage, and Frederick teased him so much to be taken up on the seat, that at last he consented. After they had gone a little way, Peter dropt the whip, and went down for it. The horses, finding the

reins in weaker hands, ran off. Luckily the harness gave way, and nothing suffered but the carriage.

Mr. V. That was not enough perhaps ! And who, on the whole, had more reason to complain than I ?

Mary. Frederick, whose head was terribly cut ; but above all, poor Peter, who lost his place by it.

Mr. V. I cannot even now think of it with patience. That fine adventure cost me above eighty guineas !

Mary. And how much grief has it cost the good-natured Frederick ! He will never forgive himself for having occasioned poor Peter's disgrace.

Mr. V. Two good-for-nothing fellows, fit to go together ! I am surprised however that you select the worst characters, and plead their cause. Really, it is a pity that you were not born a boy, to be companion to your cousin. I think you would have had charming adventures together.

Mary. Nay, but—

Mr. V. Silence ! your teasing tires me. I am going to take a turn in the garden. Find Dorothea, and both of you come to me. (*Goes out without his hat.*)

Mary. I shall have a good deal of trouble to reconcile father. I will not, however, despair. He is only ill-natured in words.

Dorothea. (*half opening the door, and peeping in.*) Hist !

Mary. Well ?

Dor. Is my uncle out ?

Mary. He has just gone. Where is Frederick ?

Dor. He waits for us on the back stairs.

Mary. You have only to take him to our room.

Dor. No ; that won't do. Jenny is there.

Mary. Why cannot we bring him here ? Nobody comes here when father is out.

Dor. You are right ; and it will be easier too for him to slip out upon any occasion. Stay here, I will bring him up. (*Goes out.*)

Mary Anne. How anxious I am to hear him tell his story ! and I shall be glad to see him too. It is above a year since he left us. Ah ! I hear him. (*Goes to the door to meet him.*)

Enter Dorothea and Frederick.

Mary. (*embracing him.*) Ah, my dear cousin.

Dor. He deserves this kindness, indeed, for the trouble he has caused us !

Fred. Dear cousin, do I find you still the same ? You have never been so hard upon me as my sister.

Dor. If I were as much so as your uncle ; ah, then——

Fred. What does *he* say ? Can it be true, that he is so enraged against me ?

Dor. If he knew we concealed you, we should have nothing more to do than quit the house.

Mary. O, it is very true. Do not think of appearing before him yet awhile. He is in no humor to receive you.

Fred. What can our head master have written ?

Dor. A handsome encomium upon your exploits.

Mary. My brother had touched a little upon the subject by yesterday's mail.

Fred. What ! has Richard written ? Then I have no need of justification. He knows the whole matter as well as I, for I trusted him with every thing.

Mary. Shall we judge of you from his letter ?

Fred. Well, if I be not innocent, I am the greatest rogue——

Dor. That is saying nothing. You *must* be either one or the other.

Fred. And could you think me guilty ? What is my crime ? selling my watch ?

Dor. No more than that ? who can tell if your shirts too, and your clothes——

Fred. Very true. I would have sold every thing, if I had occasion for more money.

Dor. Truly, a very pretty defence ! And to pass whole nights from the school ?

Fred. One night, sister.

Dor. And to rebel against merited punishment ?

Fred. Say rather against an outrage which I did not deserve. If I had submitted to it, I should always have borne a blot in the opinion of my uncle ; and, if they had expelled me, I should never have appeared before you.

Mary. But, dear Frederick, what can you say in your own defence ? We ought to know it, in order to clear you to my father.

Fred. These are the facts. Some days ago, it was said there was to be a fair in a neighboring village. Our master gave a few of us leave to go thither, in order to amuse ourselves, and gratify our curiosity.

Dor. Then it was for oranges and tarts that your

watch and *Whole Duty of Man* were sold ? or perhaps for a sight of monkeys and tumblers.

Fred. Surely, my sister must have a great taste for those things, to suppose one could spend money on them. No, it was not so. I was thirsty, and went into a public house to have some beer.

Dor. Why, that is worse still.

Fred. Really, sister, you are very severe. But let me finish. While I was sitting there——

Mary. (*listening at the door.*) We are undone ! my father ! I hear him !

Dor. Run ! run !

Fred. No ; I will wait for my uncle, and throw myself at his feet.

Mary. O no, dear cousin ! he will not listen to you. Do, for my sake——

Fred. Would you have me go ?

Mary. Yes, yes, leave me to manage for you.

[She pushes him to the door of the back stairs,
shuts it, and returns.

Enter Mr. Vaughan.

Mary. Ah, father, I see you have soon returned from your walk ?

Mr. V. I am looking for my hat. I don't know where I left it.

Dor. Here, here it is.

Mr. V. You could not think of bringing it to me.

Dor. I must have been blind, sure, not to see it.

Mary. Who can think of every thing ?

Mr. V. Truly, you have many things to occupy your attention !

Mary. I was thinking of poor Frederick.

Mr. V. Must that name still be rung in my ears?

Mary. Well, father, let us talk no more about him. Would you not choose to finish your walk before the dew falls?

Mr. V. No. I will not go out this evening.

[*Mary Anne and Dorothea look at each other, shaking their heads with an air of disappointment.*

It is too late. Besides, I have been told that my old coachman is below, and would speak with me.

Mary and Dor. What! Peter?

Mr. V. Whatever loss he has caused me, the damage is done, and he has been sufficiently punished for it. I would know what he has to say.

Mary. He might very well wait till you return from your walk.

[*Mary Anne and Dorothea whisper together.*

Mr. V. No, no. I shall dismiss him the sooner.

[*Dorothea endeavors to steal away.*

Where are you going, Dorothea?

Dor. (confused.) I have business down stairs.

Mr. V. Well, tell Peter to come up. After all, I pity the poor man. I never had so good a coachman. My horses were kept so sleek, you might see your face in their coats; and he never embezzled their corn at the tavern.

[*Dorothea goes out.*

Mary. If you had kept him, you would have spared poor Frederick many a sorrowful moment.

Mr. V. Say no more of him. He caused me to discharge Peter, and to be at present without a

coachman ; for, after him, I conceived a dislike to all others. I shall never find one equal to Peter.

Enter Dorothea and Peter.

Dor. Uncle, here is Peter.

Pet. I beg pardon, sir, but I cannot think that you are still angry with me. I hope you will not take it amiss that I make bold to wait on you, as I pass your house, and beg you to let me have a discharge.

Mr. V. Did I not give you one ?

Pet. I never had any other than ‘ There, take your wages ; quit my house this moment, and never let me see you again.’ You did not give me time, sir, to ask for a gentler discharge.

Mr. V. You did not deserve more ceremony from me, after destroying my finest coach. I almost wish Frederick had broken his neck at the same time.

Pet. What could you expect, sir ? A coachman’s sense lies in his whip, and I had just lost possession of mine. But I shall be wiser for the future.

Mr. V. Well, it is all over now. How do you live ?

Pet. Since I left your house, sir, I have never had a happy moment. You know, upon quitting your service, I went to live with Major Bramfield. O what a master ! He could never speak but with his cane lifted up ; but rest his soul !

Mr. V. He is dead then ?

Pet. Yes, sir, to the great joy of his soldiers. He never gave me his orders without swearing like a Turk. His horses had their full measure of corn,

and his people plenty of hard knocks, but not much bread.

Ma. Poor Peter ! why did you stay in his service ?

Pet. Where could I go ? What kept me there was, that my wife found employment in the house in washing and mending linen. She earned at least half as much as maintained our children. Every one trembled before the Major. Death alone made him tremble, and laid him low. At present I am out of service, and know not where to lay my head.

Mr. V. But you know I never wish any one to starve, much less an old servant.

Pet. I always thought so ; but those terrible words, ' Never let me see you again,' sounded like a clap of thunder in my ears. Ten of the Major's greatest oaths could not frighten me so much.

Mary. And you have had no master since ?

Pet. Ah, miss, it is not here as it is in London. In the poor little villages about here, people want their corn more for themselves than for their horses. I worked at daily labor in the fields ; my wife spun ; and my children went about asking charity. But all of us together made so little, that, at the week's end, we were not able to pay the rent of a poor garret. Very soon we had nothing but the earth for our bed, and the sky for our covering. My poor wife died of grief and hardship.

Mr. V. You deserve it all. Why did you not come and ask my assistance ?

Mary (to Dor.) Now my father shows himself once more. A good sign for Frederick.

Pet. Ah, sir, what a woman she was ! Never was a better wife. Whenever I came home at night, not having earned a farthing, and thought that I must go to bed hungry, I always found half of her morsel of bread left purposely for me. When I foamed with rage, like one in despair, and would have destroyed every thing around me, she always restored me to my calm senses, and made me a reasonable man again. Now she is dead, and I cannot bring her to life. There my real unhappiness began, and heaven knows where it will end.

Dor. Poor Peter !

Pet. I had no hopes of finding a service in these parts, so I set out one fine evening, with my little girl in my arms, and my boy by the hand. We walked a great part of the night, and slept the remainder under a hedge. Next morning by break of day we were in sight of a town. Luckily, there was a fair there that day. I earned some money by carrying burdens. But, sir, I must say, it was an angel, an angel from heaven, master Frederick——

Mr. V. An angel ? what Frederick, that reprobate ?

Mary & Dor. [*approaching Peter with looks of joy and curiosity.*] What, Frederick ? Frederick ?

Pet. Dear master, use *me* ill if you will ; but not that fine, generous child. I would rather that you should trample me under your feet.

Dor. O tell us, Peter ; tell us.

Pet. My little Lucy went to ask charity at the door of a public house. Master Richard and mas-

ter Frederick were there, sitting at a table, with some beer before them.

Mr. V. Aye, fine inclinations ! in an alehouse !

Dor. He went only to refresh himself!

Mary. He had leave, father, to see the fair. Your good Richard, you see, was there too,

Pet. He presently knew my child, and rose from table in spite of all his companion could say. He made poor little Lucy drink a glass of ale, took her by the hand, and heard from her a brief account of our misery. He then desired her to bring him to me, and found me in the next street, drinking out of my hat at a pump, as the heat of my walk and labor had made me thirsty. I thought I should go mad upon seeing him. Shabby and dirty as I was, I took him in my arms before every body ; and hugged him so close, the folks were afraid I should stifle him. He was heartily glad to see me too. At last, as there was a crowd around us, he told me to lead him to a place where we might be by ourselves, and I took him to a barn, where I had already bespoke my bed for the night.

Mary. Father, I would wage——

Mr. V. Silence. Well, Peter ?

Pet. I told him what I have now told you. The child began to weep. 'I should beg for you,' said he, 'as I am the cause of your misfortunes ; but I will not sleep without relieving them. Here, Peter,' said he, feeling in his pockets, 'take what money I have about me.' I refused it ; but that made him angry. I told him, that it was money

given him for his amusement ; and that, as for me, I was used to hardship. He frowned, and stamped with his feet, and appeared so vexed, that I was compelled, as it were, to take his purse.

Mr. V. How much was there in it ?

Pet. Almost a crown. He would keep only sixpence. 'It shall never be said,' continued he, 'that an honest servant of my uncle, who has neither robbed nor defrauded any one, shall be obliged to beg with his children about the streets, and not even have a lodging. Take a little room. Before three days I will return, and I will support you until I shall have written to my uncle. We have both provoked him ; but he is too humane and too generous to abandon you to misery.

Mr. V. Did he really say so, Peter ?

Pet. I can take my oath of it, master.

Mary. Well, we believe you ; finish your story.

Pet. 'How do you employ your children ?' said he, as he took my Billy upon his knee. Employ them ? said I, they go about selling nosegays and toothpicks ; and when nobody buys, they ask charity. 'That is not right,' said he. 'They would never learn any thing by that course but idleness and profligacy. You should make your boy learn a good trade, and put the girl out to decent service.'

Mary. Frederick spoke very right, father.

Pet. Yes, said I ; but how can I offer the children to any body in these rags ? If I only had three guineas, I could settle them. There is a weaver hard by, who employs young hands, and would take my

Billy, if I could give him two guineas fee money ; and a dairy-man's wife would take Lucy into her service, if she was a little better clad. Then I could offer myself for service in some rich family, and not be reduced to stroll about like a vagrant.

Mr. V. And what did Frederick say ?

Pet. Nothing, sir. He went away ; but, two days after, returned. ' Where is the weaver, who will take your son as apprentice ? carry me to him.' So I went ; he spoke with him privately awhile. ' And the dairy-woman,' said he, ' who will take charge of Lucy ? where does she live ?' I took him there too, He left me at the door ; went and spoke to the woman in her dairy ; joined me again, without saying a word, and we came away. After we had walked some distance, he stopt, ' My honest old friend,' said he, ' make yourself easy as to your children.' He then pointed me to a shop of second-hand clothes, that was close by, where he had paid beforehand for this jacket, and this great coat — Don't I look like a gentleman in them ?

Mary. O my excellent cousin ! good-natured Frederick.

Mr. V. (*wiping his eyes.*) I see now where the watch went.

Pet. That is not all, sir. I caught him slipping money into my pocket. I wanted to return it, and told him that he had already done too much for me. But, if ever I saw him fall into a passion, it was then. He said, sir, that it was you who had sent it to him for my use. And when I answered I would

go directly and thank you, he told me that you would not have it mentioned. Ah, thought I to myself, Mr. Vaughan was so good a master, perhaps he would take me again ! For all that, I did not dare to apply, as master Frederick had forbidden it.

Mr. V. O, Frederick ! my dear Frederick ! you have still that noble and generous heart I always thought you to possess from your infancy.

Mary. And what induced you at last to appear again before my father ?

Pet. My errand was this : The weaver would not take my boy without a copy of the register of his baptism, and for that I had to come to the clerk of this parish. As I entered the village, I heard that lord Vasty wanted a coachman. It seemed as if master Frederick had sent me good luck. I waited on lord Vasty, who promised to take me, provided I could bring a proper discharge from my last master. I could not go into the other world to ask the Major for one ; so I took my chance to apply to you, sir, though sadly frightened. And, if you refuse, I shall at least return you my thanks for the relief that you were so kind to convey to me through the hands of master Frederick.

Mr. V. No, honest Peter. You are indebted to him alone. He has stripped himself to cover you. But he is also indebted to you for the return of my favor. You have saved him from a great misfortune. My resentment against him was so great, that, except for your timely application, he would have been banished from my presence.

Pet. Do you say that, sir ? Then I am the happiest man in the world if I have done him any good.

Mr. V. That sneaking varlet, Richard, had almost turned my heart against him. How could I trust that knave, who has so often deceived me ? But the head-master of the school ?——

Mary. Why, father, Richard must have imposed on him as well as you.

Mr. V. But, bless me, they have written word that Frederick has fled. If he should grow desperate ! If any misfortune should happen to him !

Pet. A horse ! a horse ! I'll bring him back, if he were at the world's end. [Going to run out.]

Dor. (*holding him.*) My dear uncle, would you really pardon him ? would you take him to your arms once more ?

Mr. V. Yes ; though he had sold all his clothes ! though he were to return as naked as he was born !

[Dorothea makes a sign to Mary Anne, and goes out]

Mary. What if he were here, father ?

Mr. V. Here ? has any one seen him ? where is he ?

Pet. Ah, if he were here ! if he were here ! I would jump up to the ceiling for joy.

Enter Frederick and Dorothea.

Mary. Well, father, do you see him ?

[Frederick kneels to his uncle. Peter shows an extravagance of joy.]

Fred. Uncle, dear uncle, will you forgive me ?

Mr. V. Forgive you ? I love you a thousand times better than ever. You deserve it, and shall never leave me again.

Fred. No, uncle ; never, never. [*turning his eyes he sees Peter. and takes him by the hand*] If you had seen the misery of this poor man and his children ! if you had been the cause of their distress !

Pet. 'Twas I, 'twas I myself ; why did I let you climb upon my seat, or leave you to manage a pair of fiery horses ? But who could refuse you any thing ? I could not, though the carriage were to run over me. So mark, master Frederick, never ask any thing improper again ; I should agree to it, I knew ; but I should go and drown myself directly.

Mr. V. Why didn't you write to me an account of all this suffering, instead of selling your watch, your books, and perhaps your clothes. It was, at least, an imprudence in a child like you, who cannot know the value of things.

Fred. That is true ; but to let this family be a moment longer in distress seemed to me as still worse. Besides, as you had in a passion turned Peter away, I was fearful you would forbid my assisting him ; and that, by disobeying your express orders, I should render myself still more blameable.

Mr. V. What, then, would you in that case have disobeyed me ?

Fred. Yes, uncle ; but in that only.

Mr. V. Kiss me, my brave Frederick. After all, there is one item in the letter which makes me hesitate ; that is, sleeping away from home. Where did you pass the night ?

Fred. On that day I carried the money to Peter. Our master was absent, and I knew that the doors

would be locked at ten o'clock that evening. I expected to be at home early enough, and should have been, if I had not lost my way after dark.

Dor. Poor brother ! where did you go ?

Fred. I found an empty shed, and there stretched myself upon a stone, and never slept better in my life. I felt happy, because Peter was relieved.

Mary. Ah, that ill-natured Richard ! he took good care not to tell us this, and yet he knew it all.

Mr. V. From this moment I withdraw my regard from him, and you alone——

Fred. No, uncle ; I shall not be happy at the expense of another, and far less at that of your son.

Dor. (taking his hand.) How much had I ought to love such a brother !

Mr. V. Well, let him remain at the school ; you shall never leave me. I wish to have you near my heart, and will have teachers for you here of all sorts.

Pet. (making a low bow.) My worthy master ! you are always the same.

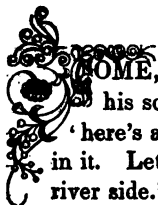
Mr. V. (patting him on the shoulder.) Peter, has lord Vasty engaged you as his coachman ?

Pet. Bless you, sir, I had no discharge to show.

Mr. V. You shall not need one. I shall make you and Frederick happy by being near each other once more. But never let him mount your seat again. We shall take care of your children too.

Pet. Dear master ! are you serious ? Is not this a dream ? Frederick ! master Frederick ! shall my poor children——Ah, let me go and see my old friends in the stable !

THE THREE CAKES.



‘**COME**, come,’ said Mr. Bellamy to Albany his son, one beauteous summer morning, ‘here’s a basket with some cakes and currants in it. Let’s be gone, and breakfast by the river side.’

‘With all my heart, father,’ said Albany, jumping about for joy. He took the basket in one hand, and with his other in his father’s, hastened toward the river, which they soon reached. Walking on a little way, they arrived at a very pleasant spot.

Mr.B. Let’s stop here, Albany ; for this will yield us a delightful prospect, while we sit and eat.

Alb. But how are we to eat without a table ?

Mr.B. Fortunately here’s the trunk of an old tree that will serve for a table very well, if we need one ; but you may eat your currants from the basket.

Alb. So I can ; but how shall we supply the want of chairs ?

Mr.B. Do you reckon this soft grass as nothing ? See how thick it is painted with flowers. We will take our seat upon it ; or perhaps you will rather choose the carpet ?

Alb. Choose the carpet ? Why you know, father, the carpet’s fast nailed down upon the parlor floor.

Mr.B. It is true there is a carpet there ; but still there is one here.

Alb. If there is, I don't see it.

Mr.B. Why, what's the grass but a carpet for the fields? And what a charming one? It is of a fresh color, and much more downy than any one we have. How spacious too! it covers every hill, and all the level plain. The lambs repose upon it at their ease. Think, Albany, what they would have to suffer on a bare or stony piece of ground! their limbs are delicate, and could not but be quickly injured. They have mothers, but those mothers cannot make them soft feather-beds. God therefore has provided for them better than the poor sheep can, and spread them this soft couch, where they may roll about, or sleep at their ease.

Alb. And then, father, there's another good thing; they may eat it when they like.

Mr.B. I understand your meaning. So take your cake and currants.

Alb. O, how good! There's nothing wanting but a story while I'm feasting. Will you tell me one, father, the prettiest you may know?

Mr.B. With all my heart. Your cake reminds me of a story I can tell you about three cakes.

Alb. One, two, three cakes! What a charming story that must be! Pray tell it, father.

Mr.B. Come and sit by me then. Be wholly at your ease, and you'll hear the better.

Alb. I'm quite ready; so begin.

Mr.B. There was a little boy named Paul, about your age. His parents had lately fixed him at an academy. He was a smart boy; forever at his

book ; and he happened once to get the highest place at exercises. His mother was told of it. She was delighted with the news, and it was that night the subject of her dreams. When morning came, she said to the cook,—‘ You are to make a cake for Paul, who yesterday was very good at school.’—‘ With all my heart,’ replied the cook, and set immediately about it. It was as big as—let me see—as a hat, rim and all. The cook stuffed it with pistachio nuts, and candied lemon-peel, and iced it over with a coat of sugar, so that it was very smooth and perfectly white. The cake no sooner came from the oven, than the footman was despatched with it to school. When Paul first saw it he jumped up and down like a Merry Andrew. He was not patient enough to wait for a knife, but fell upon it tooth and nail. He ate and ate till school began, and, after school was over, he ate again : At night too it was the same till bed-time. Nay, a little fellow Paul had for a playmate told me, that he put the cake upon his bolster when he went to bed, and waked, and waked a dozen times, that he might take a bit. I cannot easily believe this last particular ; but then it is very true that on the morrow, when the day had hardly broke, he set about his favorite business once again, continuing it all the morning, and by noon had ate it up. The dinner-bell now rung, but Paul had no appetite, and was vexed to see how heartily the other children ate. It was however worse than this, at five o’clock, when school was over, His companions asked him if he

would not play at cricket, taw, or kites. Alas, he could not ; so they played without him. In the mean time Paul could hardly stand upon his legs ; he went and sat down in a corner very gloomy, while the children said to each other, ' What's the matter with poor Paul, who used to skip about, and be so merry ? See how pale and sorrowful he is ! ' The master himself came, and was quite alarmed. It was lost labor to question Paul. He could not speak a single word. By great good luck, a boy at last came forward who was in the secret ; and his information was, that Paul's mother had the day before sent him a great cake, which he had swallowed in an instant as it were ; and that his present sickness was occasioned only by his gluttony. The master sent for the doctor, who ordered him a quantity of physic. Paul, as you may fancy, found it very nauseous and bitter ; but was forced to take the whole of it, for fear of dying, which would otherwise have happened. After a few days had passed, during which physic was given and strict regimen observed, his health was re-established as before ; but his mother protested she would send him no more cake.

Alb. He did not merit so much as the taste of such a thing. But this is only one cake, father ; and you said there were three cakes in your story.

Mr.B. Patience ! I am now going to tell you about another cake.

Paul's master had another scholar, and his name was Francis. He had written a very pretty letter

to his mother, and it had not a blotted stroke in it. In recompense for this neat performance, she sent him a large cake ; and Francis thus addressed himself : ‘ I will not, like that glutton Paul, eat up my cake at once, and be sick as he was. No, I’ll contrive that my pleasure shall last a great deal longer. He took the cake, which he could hardly lift, and watched for an opportunity of slipping up into his chamber where his box was, in which he put it under lock and key. At playtime every day he stole away from his companions, went up stairs on tiptoe, cut a tolerable slice from the cake, swallowed it, again locked up the remainder, and then came down and joined his companions. He continued this clandestine business all the week ; and even then the cake was hardly half consumed. But what ensued ? The cake at last grew dry, and then quickly became mouldy ; nay, even maggots got into it, and by that means had their share ; on which account it was finally not fit to eat, and our young curmudgeon with great reluctance was compelled to throw the rest away. No one however grieved for him.

Alb. No indeed ; nor I, father. What ! keep a cake locked up seven days together, and not give one’s friend a slice ! That’s monstrous ! But please to tell me about the third cake.

Mr.B. There was another little gentleman, who went to school with Paul and Francis, whose name was Gratian. His mother sent *him* a cake one day, because she loved him, and he loved her very

much. It was no sooner come than Gratian thus addressed his young companions : ' Come and look at what my mother has sent me ; you must every one eat with me. They scarcely needed such a welcome piece of information twice, but all got round the cake, as you have doubtless seen the bees resorting to a flower newly blown. As Gratian was provided with a knife, he cut off a great piece, and then divided it into as many shares as he had collected boys together by such a courteous invitation. He ranged his young friends in a circle, and, beginning with the boy that stood next to him, he went round, distributing to each his portion, till the shares were all bestowed. Gratian then took up the rest, and told the boys he would eat his piece next day. He then went to play with his companions, who were all solicitous that he should choose whatever game he liked.

They had scarcely played a quarter of an hour, when a poor old man, with a violin, entered the yard. He had a long white beard, and, as he was blind, a little dog went before and guided him, having a collar round his neck, to which a cord was fastened, one end of which was held by the poor blind man. It was noticed with what admirable dexterity the little dog conducted him, and how he shook a bell that hung below his collar, when he came near any one, as if he had designed to say by such an action, ' Don't run against my master, nor knock him down.'

The old man, after coming into the yard, sat



down upon a stone ; and, hearing several children talking around him, ' My dear little gentlemen,' said he, ' I'll play you all the pretty tunes I know, if you will give me leave.' The children said they should be very glad to hear him. He put his violin in tune, and then thrummed over several jigs and other scraps of music, that it was easy to conjecture had been new in old times.

Gratian saw, that, whilst he played his merriest airs, a tear would now and then run down his cheek ; he therefore asked him why he wept ? ' Because,' said the musician, ' I am very hungry. I

have no one in the world to give my dog or me any thing to eat. I wish I could work, and get for both of us a bit of something ; but I've lost my strength and sight. Alas ! I labored hard till I was old, and now want bread.'

The generous Gratian, upon hearing this, wept too. He said not a word, but ran to bring the cake he had designed to eat himself. He brought it out with joy, and, as he ran along, said, ' Here, old man, here is some cake for you.' ' Where ? ' replied the poor musician, feeling with his hands ; ' where is it ? for I am blind and cannot see you.' Gratian put the cake into his hand ; and, laying his fiddle on the ground, the old man wiped his eyes and began to eat. At every piece he put to his mouth, he gave a portion to his faithful dog, who came and ate out of his hand ; and Gratian, standing by him, smiled with pleasure at the thought of having fed the poor old man when he was hungry.

Alb. O the good, good Gratian ! Let me have your knife, father.

Mr. B. Here it is, Albany ; but for what purpose ?

Alb. I'll tell you, father. I was so pleased in listening to you, that I have only nibbled a little of my cake. I'll now cut it smooth. There, see how well I've done it ! These scraps, together with the currants, will be more than I shall want for breakfast : and the first poor man I meet in going home, shall have the remainder, even though he should not play upon the fiddle.

THE DESERTER.

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS.

CHARACTERS.

MOORHOUSE, an Innkeeper.

GRACE, his Wife.

GEORGE, their son, a Corporal.

TRUNNION, his Comrade.

THOMAS, Brother to Moorhouse.

SYEWARD.

CAPTAIN.

SERGEANT.

*During the two first acts, the scene is the Innkeeper's house ;
changes to a prison in the last act.*

ACT I

*Grace spinning with a distaff and spindle. Enter
Moorhouse, who says :—*



HERE is a soldier coming, Grace.

Grace. (*letting her spindle fall.*) A soldier ! What are we to do ? Our trade gone, and a soldier quartered upon us !

Moorh. It is not likely he will help us, yet perhaps he may have more compassion on our poverty than richer folks. A soldier's character, my dear, is much misrepresented ; he has far more conscience than a steward,

who is hardened and oppresses the poor by dint of habit, whilst a soldier is thinking of another life, because he has death always before him.

Enter Trunnion.

Trun. Save you ! I am come to be your guest. Here's the billet : it is for two. Another is coming.

Moorh. We would entertain you, soldier, with all our hearts, but we really have not the means. We keep a public house, yet custom is so dead that we cannot renew our license, which soon expires. We signified this circumstance to justice Parsons in the neighborhood, and begged that no soldiers might be sent to this house ; but he answered, that, till our license expired, we must be considered as innkeepers, and take the consequences. Indeed, we have now hardly a single customer : the house is deserted, and our stock of liquor out to the very last drop.

Trun. But, for pity's sake, tell me, my good people, how do you live without a fire ?

Gra. When one has no fuel nor money to buy it—

Trun. I must have some fire to warm me, and a little dinner too. Have you any thing to give me ?

Grace. Nothing ; not so much as bread. We live from hand to mouth ; and, when we get one meal, cannot tell when we shall have another. If you disbelieve me, take a look about the house, and see if you discover aught but poverty in it.

Trun. No, no ; I believe and pity you. I have a little money in my pocket, which I cannot do better than share with you. My good friend, here is a shilling and some halfpence ; go and buy us some-

thing to eat ; you shall take a bit along with us ; but first, we want a little wood.

Moorh. You are very kind ; I will run immediately. [*Exit.*

Trun. And in the mean time, with your leave, good madam, I will examine my arms.

Grace. With my leave, my good friend ? Do what you please ; you are welcome.—(*Aside.*) My husband was right ; soldiers are much better christians than too many gentlefolks.—(*To Trun.*) My son is likewise a soldier.

Trun. In what regiment ?

Grace. Colonel Sheffield's.

Trun. What is his name ?

Grace. George Moorhouse. Heaven knows if he be alive. I have not heard of him these four years.

Trun. Do not be uneasy, he is still living.

Grace. Dear sir, do you know him ?

Trun. (*embarrassed*) I can't tell that ; but I suppose he is living, as he came of such good folks.

Grace. Ah, that's no reason.

Trun. But I wish your husband were returned. If I had the wood, I would make a fire. My comrade is rather boisterous, and will be angry if he do not find all things ready when he comes.

Grace. O, you will excuse us. A good word from you will pacify him.

Trun. Words will not do with him, and besides he is a corporal. I must not speak to him as I please.

Enter Moorhouse.

Moorh. (*throwing down a faggot.*) Here is

wood, and a nice bit of meat, besides turnips that a gardener gave me ; and here's some change left.

Trun. Keep that to buy us some small beer. I thought to have had a pint of porter ; but my family has increased, and my liquor must be weaker.

Grace. Come, my dear, open the faggot, and I will make a fire : the gentleman says, that his comrade is rather hasty.

Trun. Yes ; and, as a noncommissioned officer, he will expect things to be as they should be. He is giving orders in the company, otherwise he would have been here before now. Ah ! here he comes.

Enter George.

Geo. Well, is dinner ready ? Make haste, good folks.

Moorh. It is not our fault, sir, that matters are not forwarder. Your comrade will inform you.

Trun. (*in a whisper to George.*) Come, finish this child's play, and tell them who you are.—(*To Grace.*) Examine this young man, good mother.

Geo. Don't you recollect me ?

Grace. (*after looking at George with attention.*) Heavens ! can it be George ?

Geo. Yes, yes, it is, dear mother ! What pleasure to behold you after such long absence !

Moorh. Is it possible ? my son ! O welcome, dear, dear boy, a thousand times !

Grace. (*embracing him.*) I see you then once more before I die ? Heaven be praised !

Moorh. And how have you contrived to live ? so many, my dear son, are dead, and you in safety !

Geo. Yes, and yet I have not been deficient in my

duty. I owe it certainly to your prayers, that I have escaped safe and sound from all dangers. I find I am quartered on you : Are you sorry for that ?

Moorh. Can you ask if we are sorry ! Since the day you left us, we have never been so happy.

Grace. (*whispering to Trunnion.*) My good friend, I think you told me something of a corporal ?

Trun. George is a corporal. Don't you see it ?

Moorh. Then you are promoted ! how came this ? You could not read.

Geo. My captain had me taught.

Moorh. O, what a charming man he must be !

Grace. Let them tell us now that soldiers are not special people !

Trun. I will answer for it, George will soon be higher than a corporal.—(*To George.*) But how came you not to tell me, when you saw the billet, that you were quartered on your father ?

Geo. I was so full of joy that I could not speak.

Grace. How long are you to stay with us ?

Geo. We halt here two days.

Moorh. I am glad of that, my dear boy ; we shall have time to talk of a few matters.

Trun. Well, I can see you have enough to talk about for these three hours ; therefore, mother, show me where to make the fire and dress the meat ; I will do the whole myself.

Gra. The least I can do is to help you, good sir.

Trun. No, no ; you have enough to do with George, so do but show me your kitchen.

Gra. Since you will have it so. (*They go out.*)

SCENE II. *Moorhouse and George.*

Geo. Then, father, you are not at ease ?

Moorh. At ease ! O, no. Our custom has fallen from us, and, for these two years past, it is wonderful how we have subsisted.

Geo. But this is strange. You were formerly in a prosperous condition.

Moorh. You have reason to be surprised, knowing, as you do, how laborious we were, and that we did not manage like one half of our neighbors, who knew not how to lay by any thing against a rainy day. But we have had severe losses since you left us, and are indebted to our landlord upwards of four pounds. We cannot pay it, and the steward threatens to turn us out of doors, in which case we must beg our bread.

Geo. I did not think of finding you in such a sad situation.

Moorh. It would never have happened, had not the steward succeeded in making you a soldier. It was wholly his contrivance ; I will tell you the particulars at some other time. When he was only a bailiff, and had scarcely a coat to wear, I refused to lend him money, and it was then that his enmity against us first began. And finally he has completed his revenge. Our ruin is accomplished, and you will not inherit a groat belonging to your father.

Geo. If you had something to subsist on, I should not regard myself. Here is all the money I possess. I give it you with tears of regret that I have no more.

Moorh. May heaven repay it to you a hundred fold, my dear child ! This will keep us a few days.

Geo. Let me think a little. Can I speak with this steward.

Moorh. He will be here this very day.

Geo. Then I will tell him something that may do you good. The king is coming to review our regiment : you can go and tell him your sad situation.

Moorh. I go tell him ! I should not be able to pronounce a word before him. I should stand stock still, or perhaps run away through fear and terror, were I forced into his presence.

Geo. Never fear ; he would return you a kind answer. I was once a sentinel at Windsor on the Terrace, when the king was walking there. I shall never forget with what familiarity he spoke to people ; but that's nothing. One morning, as he was walking through the town, he overtook a poor man's child, and, entering into conversation, found him such a clever little fellow, that he gave him a guinea. When the father heard of it, he watched several mornings, and at last obtained a sight of the king, and thanked him for the gift to his son ; on which the king gave him another guinea for his gratitude.

Moorh. That was very kind.

Geo. Believe me, I had rather have to speak with him than many of our officers.

Moorh. What a good king !

Geo. There cannot be a better. Pray hear what I intend to do. I will get our quarter-master to

write me a petition ; and though you should have twenty miles to walk, it is worth the trouble.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Moorhouse, Grace, George, (standing near a table.)*

Grace. We have but two plates.

Geo. No matter, mother. Our provider will be with us very shortly.

Moorh. What a deal of pains he takes for us !

Geo. You don't know him yet ; next to fighting, he likes nothing half so well as cooking : here he comes.

Enter Truncheon, with the meat and turnips dressed.

Tru. Here, my friends. Here is what will warm our stomachs this cold weather. I have made a little broth ; and, take a soldier's word, you will find it excellent. Let us sit down ; but first say grace.—

• Come, help yourselves. They say there is no eating broth without a spoon ; so here is mine. (*He takes a knife and spoon from his pocket.*)

Moorh. I am very glad of that ; we have but two.

[*They help themselves.*]

Gra. (*to Moorhouse.*) The broth is excellent !

Moorh. I have not eaten so good for many years.

Geo. Do not spare it then. To say the truth, I have tasted worse.

Gra. We would never wish for better as long as we live : nay, nor yet so good, except on Sundays.

Geo. Well, let us now begin upon the meat.

Trun. (to *Moorhouse*.) But how is this, my friend, you have no plate ?

Gra. O, never mind ; one plate will serve us both.

Trun. Here is mine.

Moorh. By no means.

Trun. I can make myself a plate. [*He cuts a slice of bread, and puts his meat upon it.*] We should be finely off in camp if we waited for plates !

Geo. But, father, you do not eat ; what ails you ?

Moorh. Ah !

Trun. What makes you sigh ?

Moorh. I cannot help sighing, when I reflect, I should have treated George at my expense on his return, but was without a morsel of bread to give him.

Geo. Pray do not talk at this rate, father.

Trun. No, no, do not even think about it. Come, your health ! (*he drinks.*) Now you, good friend.

Moorh. (*taking the mug of ale.*) Come, here is our benefactor's health ; and many blessings on him for his kindness !

Grace. O, a thousand blessings !

Geo. Comrade, my hearty thanks to you for the friendship this day shown my parents !

Trun. Do you wish to make me proud ? You drink my health, as if I had won a battle !

Moorh. Ay, and you deserve we should. You have yourself but little, and part with it for our sakes. (*A knock without.*)

Gra. Who's there ?

Enter Captain and Sergeant.

Geo. Our captain !

Serj. (*with a memorandum-book.*) How many are you here ?

Geo. Two. (*They all rise.*)

Capt. Very well. Do not stir : and you too, my good people, keep your seats, make no ceremony. I am glad to see so much harmony and cordiality among you. Have you (*to Moorhouse*) any complaint against these men ?

Moorh. O no, sir, if they are satisfied with us.

Capt. (*To George.*) Do you like your quarters ?

Geo. Sir, I am quartered with my father : it is my comrade's part to answer.

Trun. We have every thing that we desire.

Capt. (*to Moorhouse.*) What ! is this young man your son ? You are very happy then ; for I can tell you all the regiment love him. [*He looks round.*] I am afraid you are not in very easy circumstances ; but you are rich in such a son !

Geo. I thank you, captain, for reserving this favorable testimony of me for the ears of my parents, and I hope I may so demean myself that I may never forfeit the happiness it affords them.

Moorh. O, good sir ! my bosom overflows with joy.

Grace. We should be happier, captain, could you let him stay with us.

Moorh. What, wife, to die of hunger ? Would you think it, sir, this generous soldier, altho' a stranger to us, bought the dinner we have been eating, otherwise we should not have bread to give our son ? We have lost our custom ; besides which, our landlord, for about four pounds that we owe him—

Capt. Threatens perhaps to turn you out of doors ? The case, alas, is too common ; and I pity you sincerely. Here is a piece of gold that I chance to have about me : I hope it will be of some assistance to you. George, this is what your conduct has deserved ; it is on your account I give it to your parents.

Geo. Ah, my generous captain ! if you knew how serviceable this gift is, you yourself would say that I can never repay you as I ought.

Moorh. God only can repay such bounty.

Grace. May he grant you many years of happiness ! If I had twenty children, I would resign every one of them to you with pleasure.

Capt. Good woman ! you repay my kindness very much. One child is valuable to a parent, and you would give me twenty ! But I interrupt your dinner. Farewell. If I can, I will come again and see you before we march. [*Exit.*

Serg. Truppion, be ready for the next relief : the guard will turn out soon. [*Exit.*

Triu. (*drinking.*) Long live our noble captain !

Geo. So I say ; for he has saved us from dying.

Moor. He never before saw us, yet gives us a piece of gold ! Who would have thought that a stranger would pity our situation, when we are treated with so much barbarity by those who know us ?

Grace. O, the blessed gentleman ! but how much is it worth ? (*looking at the piece of gold.*) It must be of pretty large value.

Moorh. O heavens ! that I should ever stand in

need of a single piece of money ! What is it ? Do you know its value, George ?

Grace. I never saw so large a piece of gold.

Trun. It is more, I am sure, than a guinea ; but I cannot tell how much.—Stay, let me see it—I now recollect. It is what they call a six-and-thirty ; there are many in circulation. They come from Portugal : it is worth nearly two guineas.

Gra. What ! two guineas ! almost half our debt : if the steward would take this in part, it might make the remaining payment easy to us.

Moorh. I hope he will give us a little time for the remainder.

Grace. Do you think that's likely ? I should be content to live on dry bread till next winter, provided we were not obliged to leave our house.

Geo. Do not be uneasy, mother ; I will try what I can do with him.

Gra. We stood in fear of soldiers, and a soldier is now our guardian angel !—God's good providence be praised for this repast, and the assistance that He hath sent us ! (*They all rise.*)

Trun. Well, now I will put every thing away.

Grace. Yes, truly, if I would let you. Rest yourself : I will do that myself.

Trun. No, no ; it is part of my employ. I will have you recollect the day we quartered in your little cot as long as you both live.

Graee. There is no resisting you. [*Trun. carries out the things.*] I am not surprised that the women are fond of soldiers ; they make such good

husbands ! they do all the work themselves, and with so much dexterity ! but I must follow, or he will wash the plates. (*She is going, but returns.*) Ah ! here is brother Thomas. Let us see if he will remember George.

Enter Thomas.

Grace. Brother, here is a young man come to see us. Don't take him, however, for a common soldier. Have you any knowledge of him ? or you, George, have you ? go to him, it is your uncle.

Geo. Just as if I did not recollect him !

Thomas. I your uncle ?—let me see.—No—Yes—Yes, himself. My nephew, as I live !—[*They embrace.*] One need not ask about your health ; you look so very well !

Geo. I hope, dear uncle, you are as well as I am.

Grace. I wish you knew how much his captain praises him ! I wish I could stay and tell you ; but I am forced to go, or I believe our cook would set the house to rights from top to bottom. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. *Moorhouse, Thomas, George.*

Tho. I rejoice, my dear nephew, with all my heart, to see you safe home : but trust me, if you have not heard the whole already, you could never have returned to find us more unhappy. We are all as poor as if the country had been pillaged.

Moorh. And our landlord's wicked steward would gladly, if he could, suck out the little blood that is left us.

Geo. You no longer need have any fear of him,

as you can pay down half the sum that you owe him. He must needs be patient, till such time as you can pay the rest.

Moorh. See, brother ; see what George has got me.

Tho. [to George.] Did you save it from your pay, or is it plunder ?

Geo. Neither one nor the other ; it is a present from my captain, who was here just now.

Moorh. It is to George, however, that I am indebted for it ; his captain gave it to me, because he had behaved himself so well.

Tho. In truth I am so much the better pleased ; because a soldier, who would lay up such a deal of money from his slender pay, must certainly deprive himself of many little comforts in this life ; and as to plunder, justify it how you will, it is always villanously got, and never prospers.

Geo. That's what I thought, and never went with marauding parties ; indeed with all the pillage that others got, I found they were not richer than myself. They spent half their time in the black hole in punishment of some crime or other, after they had been robbing, for it is nothing else ; one crime led to another ; whereas my officers were never troubled with complaints against me.

Tho. I believe you. All your family are honest people ; and you would not, I am sure, be the only good-for-nothing fellow of the number. We are poor indeed ; but have the fear of God before our eyes, and that is much better than the greatest riches.

Moorh. Yes ; and if the steward——

Tho. Softly, brother ; here he comes.

Enter Steward.

Stew. Well, Moorhouse, to-morrow is just at hand. You are ready, I suppose, to pay your rent, or quit your house ?

Moorh. I cannot, my good sir, pay more than half ; nor should I have been able to do that, if providence had not assisted me. Be so indulgent as to wait till harvest for the rest, and do not complete my ruin by distressing me still further than I am distressed already.

Stew. By distressing you ! the common cant : the more one does, the more one may, for such as you. How long, pray, has this rent of yours been growing ? yet my lord distresses you ! and why ? because he tells you that he will have his money ?

Moorh. But is half what we owe him nothing ? Take that half, let me beseech you, and entreat my lord in our behalf.

Stew. Yes, entreat him to let you lead him by the nose another twelvemonth ? I shall not do so : therefore pay the whole ; or else I seize, that's certain.

Geo. A little mercy, my good sir ; and think that, with a single word, you have it in your power to make my father happy. If nothing goes unpunished in this world, it is no small matter to reduce an honest man to beggary.

Stew. Mind your musket, and not my affairs.

Geo. My musket, sir, belongs to the king, and I shall take care of it without your instructions ; if

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the king were here present, he would not take it amiss that I spoke a word for my parents, and yet, I think, there is some difference between you and him.

Stew. Mr. Soldier, you may have seen some service, as they call it ; but remember, that you are not now talking to some boor whom you have plundered, and have at your mercy.

Geo. I never talked to any man as, I think, I should to you, were I to meet you in an enemy's country, now that I know your disposition.

Stew. You will never have that satisfaction.

Thom. Excuse a soldier's bluntness, good sir.

Stew. Hold your tongue likewise. I have you down on my papers, I believe.

Thom. I am sure you have ; and not me only, but all honest people.

Stew. What do mean by that ?

Enter Grace and Trunnion.

Grace. The steward here !

Moorh. Be quiet, wife.—Let me beg of you, Mr. Steward, for heaven's sake——

Stew. All your prayers are useless ; and to-morrow you shall set out on your travels.

Grace. You will surely have some pity on us. We shall soon get employment. Here is half your money, and the house will still be standing for the other half, if we should break our word.

Stew. Still standing ! you may burn it ; but, if not, I must obey the orders of his lordship.

Geo. Has his lordship ordered you to ruin a whole family for what my father owes him ? You are

paid to take what care you can of his affairs ; but, by proceeding as you would in this case, you do not earn your wages. Therefore take my counsel, and for once fulfil your real duty.

Stew. Will you tell me my duty ? you may keep your counsel to yourself ; that's what I tell you.

Geo. And you, I tell you, may be civil.

Stew. Who taught you all this impudence ?

Trun. Suppose yourself a moment in this young man's situation. He is a soldier, and knows what he has to say ; a thousand times better, at least, than any steward. You have dared, before his face, to tell his father that he shall ' go upon his travels.' We all know the meaning of that phrase ; and would you have him stand there like a post, not having the spirit to open his lips ? Who could restrain his feelings, if he saw his family on the point of being ruined by an ill-natured cur of your stamp ? We know what stewards are, and how they make their fortunes. This young man spoke to you civilly at first, and you slighted him. He has now a right to tell you the truth.

Stew. This is past bearing. [*Turns in a violent rage towards Moorhouse.*] Are you disposed to pay ? I ask you once more.

Moor. I have told you it is not in my power.

Grace. And offered you the little that we have.

Stew. I will have the whole or nothing. If it is not sent to-morrow, you shall hear from me.

Geo. [*stopping him.*] Once more——

Stew. Let me go. I'll have nothing to do with such a ragamuffin.

Geo. [*striking him*] Ragamuffin ! You are speaking to a soldier, sir ; take that : and out with you. Old rascal ! get you gone ! [*Pushes him out.*]

Stew. O, vengeance ! vengeance ! [*Exit,*

SCENE III. *Moorhouse, Grace, Thomas, George, Trunnian.*

Gra. George, my dear boy, what have you done !

Moorh. We are ruined.

Geo. Do not be frightened, father. Had you wept blood, he would not have relaxed. I never struck a man before ; but I was never called a ragamuffin in my life till now. Could I be a soldier, and have tamely borne such words ?

Trun. If you had not struck him, I was ready to strike you.

Moorh. Who knows what it may cost us ?

Geo. What, because I would not be insulted ?

Grace. It was very wrong in you ; for, notwithstanding the insult, you should have recollected that he is my lord's steward.

Geo. He is not the first of his profession who has undergone a soldier's vengeance. For my part, I think it perfect sympathy, that, when a soldier sees a rogue, he naturally knocks him down.

Grace. I can't help thinking we should have softened him at last.

Geo. No, trust me, never.

Grace. (to Moorhouse.) What think you, my love? It is best for us to go after him.

Geo. It will be useless.

Moorh. That may be; but I am resolved it shall not be said that I have left any means untried. So, Grace, let us go together.

Geo. Well, since you will go, let it be so; and, if he yields, I shall be agreeably disappointed.

Moorh. Come, wife, let us try the only method left us; and Heaven's will be done, if it should fail..

Grace. Sure, since we have struggled thro' life thus far, Providence will not let us perish at last.

Tran. Your mother, I see, has all her necessary consolations ready when she needs them. I must go on duty with our comrades. [Exit.]

SCENE IV. *George, Thomas.*

Geo. Do you think, uncle; that, by my behavior, I have exposed my parents to greater malice from the steward than they have already suffered?

Tho. I fear you have, although it was bad enough before. And yet, nephew, they might have mended their affairs last week, if they had had a little less compassion.

Geo. How, dear uncle?

Tho. They discovered a deserter, but would not inform against him, notwithstanding the reward.

Geo. Indeed!

Tho. The blacksmith here hard by was not so scrupulous, and got the money.

George. [to himself.] A deserter! a thought

strikes me.—[*To Thomas.*] Uncle, I can save my father, if I please ; but must have your assistance. May I trust you ?

Tho. Certainly.

Geo. But can you keep a secret ?

Tho. I have always thought I could.

Geo. Whatever happens ?

Tho. Yes, provided there is no wickedness in it.

Geo. None, uncle.

Tho. Well then, speak.

Geo. But were you to betray me !

Tho. It must surely be some extraordinary matter?

Geo. Yes ; but you will have no reason to fear any thing.

Tho. Well, then, to the purpose.

Geo. I will desert this very night. You shall secure me, and get forty shillings by it, which will nearly pay my father's debt.

Tho. I fancy you are turned fool ! What, I apprehend you ? I, your uncle ? Why not bid me take a musket, and shoot you at once ?

Geo. There is no musket in the case. A soldier is never shot the first time that he deserts.

Tho. Well, at least, he is flogged severely.

Geo. But I need not fear even that ; for all the officers love me, and I shall be pardoned.

Tho. No, no, I cannot consent. Suppose your father was to know it ?

Geo. Can he know it, if we keep the secret ? For deserting, as I have told you, I shall not be shot. Were there any room to fear it, I have often risked

my life to benefit my country ; surely then I can risk it to benefit my father. Think too, he is your brother, and that in this way only we can save him and my mother from beggary, and perhaps from death.

Tho. The evil one has surely brought me into this temptation. I know not what resolution to take.

Geo. Remember, you have promised ; will you break your word ? In my despair I shall desert, and then my father will get nothing by it ; so that you have no affection for your family, if you refuse.

Tho. No affection ! You hold a knife before me, and are ready, as it were, to stab me to the heart.

Geo. Well, uncle, take your choice. Time presses.

Tho. But should you deceive me, nephew ! Should your sentence be——

Geo. Of death, I have told you there is no fear. At worst it cannot exceed a whipping. I know how to suffer ; and, at every lash, I shall rejoice that I have saved my father.

Tho. Well then, I consent to do as you direct ; but, should matters fall out otherwise——

Geo. How can they happen otherwise than I have stated ? Give me your hand, and be secret. Our sergeant calls the roll, as we term it, at six o'clock, and he who does not answer has his name marked and reported to the officers as a deserter. You shall conduct me to the guard-room to-night, and tell them that you apprehended me ten miles out of town, as I was deserting from the regiment.

Tho. It will be the first deceit I ever practised.

Geo. Do not reproach yourself with it, dear uncle,

since it will secure to us both so great a blessing. Let us embrace once more ; and now go, find my father. But take care ! let me conjure you not to cause suspicion. If I am doing wrong, God will assuredly forgive me. What should not a grateful child do for the preservation of his parents !

ACT III.

SCENE I. *A prison. Drums and other music at a distance.*

Trun. [*coming in.*] O, my poor dear George ! He should have told us his distress about the steward, and not thus deserted. Who would have imagined it last night ? To have gone off, been apprehended, and suffered his punishment, all within the compass of a single night and morning ! But it is over, and I am glad of it. He has borne it like a hero, and never uttered a groan ; the regiment, that loved him so well hitherto, will, I am sure, not love him the less for it ; for my part, I would have gone through half the punishment for him. But here he comes.

Enter George and a Sergeant.

Geo. [*lifting up his hands and eyes.*] Thank heaven ! it is done, and my father is safe !

Serg. [*in surprise, aside.*] His father is safe ! what does the man mean by that ?

Geo. Dear Trunnion !

Trun. [*embracing him.*] O, my dearest friend ! how fares it with you ?



Geo. Do not shed tears for my sake, comrade ; I am much happier than you think.

Serg. [*aside.*] Again—what can he mean ?—
[*To George.*] Shall I go and bring our surgeon ?

Geo. No, sergeant, I thank you.

Serg. [*aside, shaking his head.*] There is some mystery in this ; he may be out of his wits. I'll tell my captain what I think of the affair. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. *George, Truncheon.*

Trun. Well, at least take something to support you. [*giving him a glass of wine.*]

Geo. Thank you heartily, good friend. [*drinks.*]

Trun. I am rejoiced that the court martial, in consequence of our request in your behalf, remitted a part of your sentence. But tell me, comrade, what possessed you to desert ?

Geo. I am ashamed, dear Trunnion, to conceal the reason from you ; therefore, do not ask me ; it is a secret that I never can mention.

Enter Thomas, violently agitated.

Tho. Well, are you now satisfied ?—

Trun. Softly ! softly ! You seem agitated. Do not disturb your nephew ; he needs rest. A man is not always the same.

Geo. [*whispering to Thomas.*] You are angry, uncle. Should you speak of the affair between us, you will undo us.

Tho. I am undone already.

Geo. Are you serious ?—[*To Trunnion.*] Prithee, my good friend, leave us a moment. [*Trunnion goes aside.*]

Tho. Your father is in so great a passion that he will not see me, on account of my having informed against you, and received the money. What is worse, he will not accept a farthing of it. When I offered it to him, he rejected it with horror. ‘God forbid !’ said he ; ‘it is the price of my son’s blood.’ What shall I do ? There is scarcely a boy in the village who will not pelt me for my treachery, as they call it ; and all through you.

Geo. Be pacified, dear uncle ; every thing will yet be well. The worst is past ; and you have only

to go back, and tell my father that I desire to see him.

Tho. No, not I ;—he won't permit me to approach him. I told you so before. But I see him and my sister both coming.

Enter Moorhouse and Grace.

Grace. Where is my son ? Let me see him.

Trun. This way, good mother ; here he is.

Gra. [*running to George.*] What have you done, my son ? How could you cause us all this sorrow ?

Moorh. [*in great anger.*] Are you here, unhappy wretch ? You have yourself converted all the joy that you gave me yesterday into distress and sorrow. I will never see you more.

Geo. Dear father, pray forgive me ! I have undergone my punishment.

Moorh. Yes, for flying from your colours ; but you have not been punished for disgracing us in our old age. Sixty years, passed without a blot upon our characters, entitled us to hope that we should die without a blemish ; yet you have now covered us with infamy. But we renounce you !

Geo. Pardon, pardon me, dear father ! Heaven is my witness, that I have not disgraced you, nor wished your dishonor.

Tho. [*aside.*] What torture to hear this, and yet be forced to stand silent !

Geo. [*following Moorh.*] Do not, father, leave me thus, without embracing me ! Stay, one moment ! And you, mother, can you show yourself so cruel ?

Grace. What can I do, son ?

Moorh. Never call him son. He has forfeited the name.

Gra. Forgive him, good man! he is still our child.

Tho. Yes, brother, let your heart be moved to pity his affliction.

Moor. Hold your peace! You are equally as bad as he; you that sell your nephew for money. I will no more be your brother, nor his father.

Gra. [*after talking with George.*] Hear me, husband! He makes solemn promises. Do not make us both wretched! He is our child, the only one that we have, and can we then not love him?

Moorh. Don't say one word more, woman, but follow me. [*He is going out, but is held by Truunion.*]

Tru. Come, master Moorhouse; enough! You have vented your passion; let all be forgotten. The king accepts him again; why should not you? Give him your hand. Do you think that I should still have a regard for him, if he did not deserve it?

Gra. Hear that, my love! Do not be more hard-hearted towards him than strangers are. Consider what his captain said yesterday in his praise.

Moorh. I see him coming. To satisfy you, I will consult with him before I answer.

Enter Captain and Sergeant.

Moorh. Ah, sir, does it not afflict you, when you recollect that yesterday you spoke highly in honor of my unworthy son?

Capt. He had deserved it; I could not, however, have imagined that my commendation would have had such bad effects. But [*to George*] tell

me, what possible inducement had you to desert ? Your motive must have been a very urgent one. Whatever may be the consequence, let me know the secrets of your heart. You have been punished, and have therefore nothing to fear.

Geo. My worthy captain, I beseech you, withdraw not your favor from me ! I will endeavor to deserve it.

Capt. If you tell the truth, I will not. But to think that you deserted on account of a quarrel, which I understand you had with the steward, is absurd.

Geo. And yet, your honor may be assured, there is no other reason. It is well known, I never was remarkable for quarrelling with any one. The least offence appears enormous, when one has not been accustomed to it. I was so disturbed by the affair that it took away my reason ; besides which, the unhappy situation of my father aided to distract me.

Capt. What then signified the words, that you uttered on entering the prison with the sergeant ? ' Thank heaven, it is over, and my father is safe ! '

Moorh. [*astonished.*] Were these his words ? God forgive me, but satan must have turned his brain.

Geo. [*sighing.*] I do not remember my having said those words.

Serg. I remember to have heard you say them, when you first entered this room.

Trun. Yes, comrade. I now recollect that I also heard you utter them.

Geo. They must then have escaped me from the pain of my wounds.

Capt. They might so ; yet they are not without a meaning.

Geo. [*in great embarrassment.*] I do not know what answer to make you.

Capt. [*taking George by the hand.*] Do not, my honest fellow, study to deceive us. This desertion has some other reason than your quarrel. Your dissimulation displeases me very much ; and may entirely alienate my friendship. Was it not on account of your father——

Geo. [*eagerly.*] How, sir ? Do not believe——

Capt. I see, you are not worth the trouble I am taking for you, and no longer wish to be informed of any thing about you. You are as indifferent to me as the worst of men. You do not know, perhaps, how much you have lost by this prevarication.

Tho. I must tell the truth then, at last.

Geo. [*interrupting him.*] Dear uncle, would you wish to make us more unhappy than we are ?

Tho. [*to the Captain.*] I could explain the whole affair, sir ; but have reason to fear lest the mischief should become still greater.

Capt. No, you have nothing to fear ; I give you my promise of exemption from further punishment.

Tho. Well then, sir, it was to save his parents that he deserted. He persuaded me to turn informer, and thus procure forty shillings, that his father might have wherewithal to pay his debts ; but his father will not now hear a word about the money nor about his son. Let me therefore beseech you, sir, to receive this money ; and interpose, either

with your authority or kindness, that my brother may be benefited by what his son has affectionately done for him ; for the mystery is exactly as I have related it. [*Every one appears astonished.*]

Capt. George, what do you say to this ?

Geo. [*bursting into tears.*] You have heard the truth, sir. I beseech you, however, to believe that nothing, except my father's safety, could induce me to desert my colors. I despised the danger, hoping to save my parents ; but, since my designs are discovered, and hopes lost, I must suffer more severely.

Moorh. [*embracing George.*] What, dear George ! was it for my sake all this was done ?

Grace. [*embracing him also.*] Yes, now indeed we may embrace him, although my heart always told me that he could not be guilty.

Capt. [*taking George by the hand.*] My generous youth ! what affection and what courage ! Yet, to say the truth, your filial piety has carried you too far ; for desertion is an enormous crime.

Moorh. Most certainly ! Heaven preserve me from becoming richer by a farthing of this money !

Geo. There, uncle, see what comes of confession ! I have made myself a double criminal to get money for my father, which you find he will not accept.

Tho. Yes, I acknowledge this may be laid to my charge ; but your commander promised to hold us blameless, if we would tell the truth.

Capt. [*to Thomas.*] Let your brother have the money. Take it, my good friend [*To Moorh.*] ; for George has richly deserved it.

Moorh. I can never satisfy my feelings in receiving such ill-gotten gains.

Capt. I *will* have you take it ! and what is more, I will go and relate the matter to our colonel. [*To George.*] You have not done your duty as a soldier, I acknowledge ; but have shown yourself a son in a manner, that he cannot but be moved when informed of it. Wait for me : I will return immediately. [*Ex. Captain and Sergeant.*]

SCENE III. *Moorhouse, George, Thomas, Grace, and Trunnion.*

Geo. My consolation is, that now I can with greater confidence intreat your forgiveness, as your misfortunes are now ended, and the steward will not have it in his power to hurt you.

Trun. Yes, my good old man, forgive your son ! His wounds will be cured the sooner, if he have your blessing : besides which, you ought to consider that he is to possess your cottage after you.

Moorh. He is ; and I will preserve it for him. Come, my son, forgive your father, who has used you very unkindly ! You can scarcely conceive how much I suffered, from the thought that you had deserted your colors ; yet it seems you were even then discharging your duty towards me. How shall I repay you for so much affection, in the little time which I have to live ?

Geo. By loving me, as you always have done.

Grace. O yes ! and ten times more ; for every

morsel of bread that we eat, we can say, 'It is our dear son's gift.'

Geo. I am now happy. And I thank you, uncle, for the service you have done me.

Tho. You thank me, do you? I am glad that matters have turned out as well as they have. But, I pray you, never make such another ticklish experiment. And now, brother, have you still a grudge against me? Had it not been from a wish to serve you, I would not have been concerned in my nephew's scheme; and he would not have undertaken it except from the same praiseworthy but rash intention. As you have pardoned him, and all is likely to end well, you may extend your liberality to me.

Moorh. What can excuse your conduct, brother? I may throw myself into the flames, but he that lights them for me ought to be considered cruel. However, I will not hate you; there is my hand.

Trun. Comrade, hitherto I have loved, but now I respect you. Let us embrace then, and always be friends.

Enter Captain.

Capt. Good luck, George! you are a sergeant on the spot. The colonel, when I told about the affair between your father and yourself, was happy to promote you. Take this also from him [*giving him a purse of money*] as a witness how much he applauds your filial piety.

Moorh. & Grace. O, sir, may heaven reward you!

Capt. Nothing is due to me ; the colonel has done every thing.

[George embraces his parents, and then, turning to the Captain, says]

Geo. Sir, I most humbly ask your pardon !

Capt. You richly deserve the pleasure of embracing those who gave you birth, and to whom you have so well discharged the obligations of a dutiful son !

Tho. Well, who could have thought that old Thomas, simple as he is, would arrive at the honor of making a sergeant, as, it is plain, I have ?

Trun. Yes ; and therefore, Mr. Sergeant——

Geo. Call me nothing but comrade and friend, as we have ever been.

Trun. Well then, comrade, let us break off for the present ; and, as nothing suits a joyous time like good cheer, let us, as soon as we are able, make up for the sorrows of last night and this morning by a good breakfast. The captain and the colonel shall not be forgotten in our grace.

THE BLIND MAN'S BUFF.

A DRAMA IN TWO ACTS.

CHARACTERS.

MR. MILNER.

ALFRED, his Son.

VIOLA, } his Daughters.

CLARA, }

The two masters DANBY,
Friends to Alfred.

MARTIN, their Acquaintance.

ROGER, Mr. Milner's Groom.

ROSAMOND, } Friends of Viola

BEATRICE, } la and Clara.

LAURA, a little lame.

SCENE. *An apartment in the house of Mr. Milner ; a table, with books and papers upon it, and a speaking trumpet in the corner.*

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Alfred, speaking to his father as he goes down stairs.*

 O, father, don't be afraid ; I'll take the greatest care that no accident shall happen to your papers. I'll put your books in the closet. [*He comes forward, jumping for joy.*] We shall have some fine sport. 'When the cat's away, the mice will play.'

Enter Viola.

Well, Viola, has mother gone out, and all our little friends arrived ?

Vio. My three friends are all come ; but none of your companions yet.

Alf. O, I can easily believe you, sister. We don't go gadding like you girls : and so we are not forward in keeping appointments of this nature. You must force us from our study, if you would have us. I'd lay any wager the Danbys at least are hard at work, whilst we are speaking.

Vio. Yes, in contriving what fine tricks they can put upon us. But pray, Alfrcd, is it true that father will let us pass this evening here ? Our chamber above is so very small, we could scarcely find room to turn round.

Alf. Could my father refuse you any thing, when I undertook to ask it ? — Softly, little girl, don't discompose the papers. Let them lie.

Vio. Keep the advice, sir, for yourself ; I meant to lay them smooth.

Alf. [*with an air of importance.*] No, no, you can't, miss ; I am charged with that commission.

Vio. Truly, father could not have given it to so orderly a gentleman ! Let me, at least, assist you, and afterwards I'll put the chairs in order. These great books I'll remove first.

Alf. Don't think of touching them ! At most, I can permit you only to take one by one, and pile them up on my hands. [*She does so, till they reach his chin.*]

Vio. There's full enough.

Alf. [*leaning backward.*] One more only.—So.—I've now sufficient for one turn. [*He takes a step or two, when all the books fall.*]

Vio. [*bursting into a laugh.*] Ha, ha, ha ! there they go ! Those handsome books, father would never let us touch ! I fancy he'll be greatly pleased to see them thus tumbled all together !

Alf. I had lost the centre of gravity, as my tutor says, and you know he is gravity itself. [*He picks up the books, but they fall down as fast.*] Deuce take it ! They have been at Sadler's Wells, I think, and learnt to tumble !

Vio. You'll never finish, if I don't assist you. So, d'ye see, I'll spread my apron, and do you stoop down and pile them in it. [*Goes out.*]

Alf. [*rising out of breath.*] Bless me ! I should never do to live in that country where men go upon all-fours like monkies. [*Fans himself with his hat.*]

Vio. [*re-entering.*] Could you see how neatly I have ranged them on the mantelpiece, you'd be charmed ! So let me have the rest.

[*Alfred puts the other books, and all the papers, in his sister's lap, who says, when she receives them,*]

Well, every body must acknowledge that girls are cleverer than boys.

Alf. Yes, and you particularly. Clara is constantly employed in clearing away your shreds and rags.

Vio. And if your tutor had not his eye constantly upon you, you would never know where to find your exercises and translations. [*She looks about her.*] But I fancy now I've got them all.

Alf. Yes ; there's nothing left ; so you may go. [*Viola goes out.*]

Alf. [*putting the chairs and table in their pla-*

ces.] There, so that's done, and we shall now have elbow-room enough. I can't help thinking what fine work we shall make. However, I'm surprised they're not yet come. For my part, I can say, I hardly ever make any one wait for me when a visit is in the case,

Re-enter Viola, and looking round.

Via. Aye, very well; but, brother, you must hide this speaking trumpet. If our friends should see it, they'll be sure to stun us with the noise,

Alf. I'll put it out of their way behind the door. Let your little friends come here now, and din me with their chattering, as they used to do, and we shall see who cries out loudest.

Via. Nonsense! we need only join together; we should very shortly silence such a little thing as you.

Alf. O no; for if you ladies have your clappers well hung, we gentlemen possess a fine clear manly voice, which all respect: as thus—You hear me?

Via. [*struggling her shoulders.*] Yes; and have so much respect for you, as you say, that I'll take myself off. Farewell; I'll run and join my friends.

Alf. And bid the servant send up my visitors, when they arrive.

Via. Yes, I will.

[*She withdraws.*

Alf. [*taking up the speaking trumpet.*] Here's what has often brought me from the farthest corner of the garden, much against my inclination; and I think I hear it still—'So ho there! Alfred! Alfred!'—My young friends live only at the corner of the street. Let's see if I can hasten them. [*He puts*

the trumpet to his mouth, throws up the window, and cries out,]

Girls and boys, come out to play,
The moon doth shine as bright as day ;
Come with a whoop, and come with a call,
Come with a good will, or not at all.

[He leaves the window, and draws near the door.]
Well, is not this surprising ! 'Tis like Harlequin's enchanted horn. I think I hear them talking to each other on the stairs. *[He listens.]* Yes ! the two Danbys certainly. *[He puts the trumpet away.]* Suppose I now jump on the table, and receive them sitting on my throne !

[He runs to bring a stool, that he may put it on the table ; and prepares to take a spring ; but the arrival of the two Danbys prevents him.]

Enter the two Danbys.

Alf. Could you not have staid a little at the door till I was mounted on my throne, that I might give you audience, as they say, in all my glory ?

Elder D. Good indeed, you've no occasion for a throne, to look exactly like a king. And, active as you are, the throne might very likely cause your majesty a tumble.

Alf. Why, to say the truth, I've read of many tumbles of that nature in my ancient history.

Elder D. And in some sort such an accident has happened to my brother ; although he's no great monarch, and mounted no throne. He fell down stairs last week, and hurt his nose considerably.

Younger D. *[stuttering.]* Yes, in-dee-ee-ee !

It pains me sti-i-ill a little, and that ma-a-aster Martin is a very nau-au-aughty boy.

Alf. Does he intend to come to-night ?

Elder D. I hope he don't ; if we had thought he would be here, we should not have stirred out.

Younger D. He o-o-only thinks of mischief.

Alf. What has he done ?

Elder D. We were both going out last Saturday. I stopped to get a handkerchief ; my brother went down stairs alone, and, as it happened, Martin came out sily, jumped upon my brother, who became frightened, lost his footing, and rolled down the stairs from top to bottom.

Alf. Poor Danby ! I'm sorry for you. Martin looks for all the world as if he loved such mischief. We shall have his company this evening for the first time. His father begged my father to let him come.

Eld. D. I am sorry. We no longer speak together.

Alf. My father supposed that you were good friends, because you all lived in the same house, and intended to give you the greater pleasure.

Elder D. The greater pleasure ! We should like to have him ten miles off. Since he has been our neighbor, we have lived in constant uneasiness. He has frequently amused himself with breaking windows, and then tried to lay the blame on us.

Alf. Does no one complain of him to his father ?

Elder D. I don't know what to think of his father. He seems to me be an odd kind of man. He scolds a little, pays the damage, and that's all he does.

Alf. If I were your father, I'd quit the neighborhood, and live somewhere else.

Elder D. Yes, so he intends to do, and therefore gave warning yesterday ; and we're now forbid all connexion with this wicked Martin. Few people go by the house, without expecting some trick played or attempted. Sometimes he diverts himself with squirting puddle-water at, or pelting them with rotten apples. Nay, sometimes he'll fasten rabbits' tails, or bits of rags behind their backs, at which people who see them burst out a laughing. Then, too, he has what he calls his *caxen fishery*.

Alf. Caxen fishery !

Elder D. Yes ; he'll take off the wigs or caps of people, as they pass him, with a hook, as you would catch a trout. When some poor man stops before his window to converse with some friend, Martin instantly goes up to the balcony, with a string suspended from a fishing-rod, and a hook at the end of it, with which he jerks off the poor man's wig. He next runs and ties it to a dog he has provided for the purpose ; after which he drives the frightened creature into the street, who sets off with it, so that the poor perriwig has frequently been dragged through the mud, a long time before its owner can recover it.

Alf. But this is more than mere amusement.

Elder D. And yet this is nothing to the stories I could tell you. Why, he lames or bruises all the dogs that come near him. It is not long ago, when one of his relations broke his leg, by slipping

down stairs, where Martin had purposely scattered some peas. It is so, or my name is not Danby. As for hired servants, I am sure his father could not get any to live with him, if he did not pay them extraordinary wages.

Alf. I long to see him. I like boys a little merry.

Elder D. Nothing is more natural; but Martin's mirth is not like that of other children. You, I know, heartily love laughing; but for the world you would not hurt any one; whereas this wicked fellow laughs at bumps and bruises.

Alf. O that doesn't frighten me in the least. I shall be the better pleased in paying him as he deserves.

Elder D. If he should come, my brother won't offend you by withdrawing? He would do him some fresh mischief.

Younger D. Ye-e-es, I'll go.

Alf. No, no; we're old friends, and no new-comer shall divide us. I'll take care and manage him, I warrant you. But I hear a noise on the stairs.—It is Martin.—No, I see my sister and her company.

SCENE III. *Alfred, the two Danbys, Viola, Clara, Rosamond, Beatrice, Laura.*

Vio. Your humble servant, my good friends!—But why not seated, brother? you might easily have procured chairs for the young gentlemen. There has surely been time enough.

Alf. As if we did not know it is usual to receive the ladies standing.

Vio. I am charmed to find you knew your duty.

But where's master Martin ? [*To the Danbys.*]
I supposed you would bring him along with you.

Elder D. It is a long time, thank heaven, since we have been separated from him.

Rosa. Is he more unlucky than Viola's brother ?

Clara. [*archly.*] He would be certainly unlucky then, indeed !

Bea. Viola's brother ? He's a very lamb to Martin ; we have known him for a long time. Have we not, dear sister ?

Lau. That we have ; and he has played me many a trick.

Bea. He was very intimate with Anthony my brother ; but he's rid entirely of him now. Why, this Martin is the sorriest fellow in the world.

Vio. O, as to that, my brother is even with him.

Rosa. But to do mischief merely for the pleasure of it—there's the evil.

Vio. No, no, my brother is much better than that.

Alf. [*with an air of irony.*] Do you think so, truly ? I'm obliged to you !

Rosa. Well, my dear Viola, we'll be under your protection ; you are the biggest of us, and, at present, mistress of the house, and may command him.

Vio. Don't be afraid. I'll keep him in due bounds.

Alf. Yes, Viola ; you shall take care of the ladies ; and for you [*to the Danbys*] I'll take you under my protection.

Eld.D. He'll hardly think of playing tricks with me. He knows me, I assure you. All I fear about is my brother.

Younger D. He makes ga-a-ame of me ! yes, a-a-always !

Lau. That's his way ; the least are the ones he has to do with. He never vexes my sister—none but me.

Vio. I can believe you ; such as he are always cowards : a puppy follows close upon a cat whilst she keeps running ; but, if puss turn round, and show her whiskers, then the puppy scampers off.

Alf. Well then, sister, you shall be the cat.

Lau. And let him see your whiskers.

Vio. But methinks it would not be amiss if we sat down. Although we expect this Mr. Mischief-maker, we've no need, I fancy, to remain standing till he chooses to appear.

Alf. Hush ! here he is.

Enter Martin.

Mar. [*to Alfred and Viola, making them a bow.*] Your father was pleased to invite me to wait upon you ; so I'm come to spend the evening with you.

Vio. We are glad to see you, and shall have much pleasure in your company ; at least my brother.

Cla. Yes, indeed ; he needs some good example.

Alf. Do I ? So your good example, you would have the gentleman suppose, is not sufficient ?

Vio. Well, a truce to compliments. As mistress of the house, it is necessary I should introduce you to the company. This tall young lady, in the first place, is Miss Rosamond Ducane.

Mar. [*bantering.*] I'm charmed you tell me so.

Vio. And these are the Misses—

Mar. O, I know them very well. This here [*pointing to Beatrice*] is my lady what's her name? Pentweasel, who will take off the company, simple as she seems : And there [*pointing to Laura, and limping round the room*] is Miss Up-and-down, who broke her leg by running from the rod. This gentleman, [*the elder Danby,*] observe him, he's a grave, wise Grecian, that looks straight before him as he walks, as if he pitied us poor silly children. And this Peter Grievous, my good little friend [*showing the younger Danby, and letting fall his hat*] is 'squire A-a-atkinson, whose dear mamma forgot, poor creature ! to untie his tongue when he was born.

[The children seem surprised, and gaze at each other.]

Alf. And who am I, sir ? for methinks you seem quite clever at this sort of portrait painting.

Mar. I'm not sufficiently acquainted with you yet to take your likeness ; but I'll let you have it soon.

Vio. For you, sir, I could draw you at a glance ; and, I must tell you, the similitude would not be very pleasing. I could not have supposed it possible that any well-bred gentleman, as I imagine you affect to be, should think of turning natural defects into a theme for banter. If my little friends were not sincerely such, they would have reason to reproach me for exposing them to your indecency. But they can see I could not have expected so much offence.

Mar. Why, Alfred, I protest your sister's mighty eloquent. You need not go to church on Sundays, having such a charming preacher in the house.

Alf. She's tolerably skill'd, when the truth is to be

told to any one; and it is on that account we love her, both my sister and myself, with all our hearts.

Mar. Well, you see I'm likewise tolerably skilful in telling truth; and therefore you'll love me too, with all your heart. [*He bows to Viola.*] I ask your pardon, miss, for having taken your employment off your hands, who are so clever at it.

Vio. Your excuses and bows are both of them insults; but such insults as I despise. Were they sincere, they'd hardly make atonement for such coarse incivility. If I had not considered every word you spoke as meant in joke, however gross I might suppose it, I should know what was suitable for me to do, and have done it accordingly. Let me therefore beg, sir, that you will indulge in no more freedoms of this nature, if you intend we shall remain together.

Mar. [*somewhat embarrassed.*] I see you do not understand a little harmless piece of banter. Let's be friends. [*He holds out his hand.*]

Vio. [*giving hers.*] With all my heart, sir; but provided——

Mar. [*suddenly turning his back upon Viola, and addressing the younger Danby.*] You too are an honest little fellow, and I'll shake hands with you.

[*Danby hesitates to give his hand, Martin therefore seizes it, and shakes it so rudely, that he cries.*]

Elder D. Mr. Martin!——

Alf. [*laying hold of Martin's arm.*] Pray, sir, let this child alone; or——

Mar. Well—or what?—my little Jack-a-daddy.

Alf. [*boldly.*] I am little, I acknowledge, but yet strong enough ; and you'll find me so when my friends require to be defended.

Mar. Say you so ? In that case, I should like to be among them. But first, if you please, we'll have a tustle, just to see how you'll be able to defend them.

[Martin suddenly tries to throw him down ; but Alfred stands firm upon his ground, and Martin falls. The company rush forward to part them.]

Alf. But one moment, if you please, young ladies. I'll not do him any harm. Well, Mr. Martin, how do you find yourself ? I fancy I'm your master.

Mar. [*struggling.*] Take away your knee—or you'll stifle me.

Alf. No ; you must not think of getting up, unless you first ask pardon.

Mar. [*furiously.*] Pardon ?

Alf. Yes, sir, and of all this company, as you have certainly offended them all.

Mar. Well, well ; I do ask pardon.

Alf. If you again insult us, be assured we'll send you down into the cellar till to-morrow morning, which will cool your courage. That's much better than to hurt you. We don't think you worth the trouble. [*He loosens his hold of Martin, and, when both are up, continues.*] You have no right to be offended ; and remember, you began the game.

[Martin seems ashamed, and remains silent.]

Rosa. [*aside to Clara.*] I could not have supposed your brother half so valiant !

Clara. O, a lion is hardly bolder ! and yet he

never quarrels. He is, in short, although I say it, the best-tempered little fellow in the world. [*Aloud*] But what are we about? We ought to think of some amusement for the evening.

Alf. Certainly; for what else have we all come together? Well, what play shall we have? Something funny. What say you, Danby?

Elder D. We will let the ladies choose.

[*Martin makes mouths at Alfred and Danby; the rest pretend not to see him.*]

Vio. There, Alfred; there's a lesson for you: we may choose! Well then, suppose we play at questions and commands? or possibly you like a game at cards much better?

Lau. I should rather play at something with the younger Danby. If you've picture books, we'll turn them over; won't we?

Younger D. O-o-oh, yes.

Vio. With all my heart, sweet dears. I'll carry you up stairs. You'll want for neither pictures nor playthings there.

[*Laura and the younger Danby joyfully take hands.*]

Vio. [*to the misses.*] My friends, will you also go with me for amusement to my apartment? I've a charming bonnet you'll be pleased to look at!

All together. Yes, yes, yes; let's go.

Elder D. Will you accept of my hand as far as your apartment, Miss Viola?

Vio. Rather let Miss Rosamond or Miss Beatrice, if they think proper, have it.

[*The elder Danby presents his hand to Beatrice, who happens to stand next to him.*]

Mar. What, do you mean to leave me here alone?

Alf. No, sir; the young ladies will excuse me. So I'll stay; but I'm obliged to leave you for a moment.

Mar. Are you? Then I'll follow you. I don't like to be left alone by night, in a house where I am a stranger.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Alfred and Martin.*

Mar. The truth is, I was apprehensive you might think of playing me some trick; therefore I accompanied you. But we are now returned; and, as we are alone, we may devise some mirth between us.

Alf. Very willingly; so let us think a little.

Mar. We must have some fun with little Danby.

Alf. If by *fun* you mean some trick to hurt him, I say no; I will do nothing in a joking humor; pray leave him out, if you are bent on mischief.

Mar. I was informed, you were always merry, and at heart loved something funny.

Alf. And so I do; but I wish it to be without injury to any one. However, let us know what sort of fun you had intended.

Mar. Look; here are two large needles. I will stick them with the points upward in the bottom of two chairs, where common eyes would not discern them. You shall next offer two of these young ladies the two chairs, for very likely they'd suspect I meant them mischief of some sort or other, and they

will naturally both sit down : but figure to yourself what strange grimaces they'll both make ; ha ! ha ! It makes me laugh only to think what wry faces we shall have to look at ! Ay, ay ! and your prudish sister too will find the matter quite diverting.

Alf. But suppose I were to treat you in the same manner, would you like it ?

Mar. O, treat me ! that's different ; but those little idiots——

Alf. You call them idiots, do you, because they are not mischievous ?

Mar. You're mighty formal and precise. Shall I mention something else ?

Alf. Yes, do.

Mar. Then I've some thread, as strong as whipcord in my pocket. I'll thread one of these great needles with a little of it ; and, as soon as all of them have come down, one of us will go politely towards them, make a deal of scraping and bowing, while the other, keeping still behind, shall sow their dresses together. They'll want to dance, as you may guess ; so up we'll come, and take them out. Ha ! ha ! you know the rest ; ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

Alf. Yes, to tear their gowns, and anger their parents when they find it out ?

Mar. Why, that's the beauty of it !

Alf. What ! have you no pleasure in any thing but mischief ?

Mar. But it does not injure me.

Alf. O ho ! I understand : you think of no one but yourself, and all the world is nothing to you !

Mar. Well ; we have come together to divert ourselves, and we must positively have some laughing. So suppose we frighten Laura and little Danby.

Alf. It's quite wrong to frighten any body. Suppose any one should frighten you ?

Mar. With all my heart, if any one is able. I'm afraid of nothing.

Alf. [*aside.*] Say you so ? That we shall perhaps try.—[*Aloud.*] Well, about this frightening ?

Mar. I've an ugly mask at home. I'll run and fetch it. And do you, whilst I am gone, contrive to bring the little children down, and you shall see. I'll not be absent half a minute.

Alf. [*aside.*] Good !—the mask shall be for you.—[*Aloud, calling him back.*] But, Martin ! Martin !

Mar. What's the matter ?

Alf. It will be better to come upon them where we are, if I can bring the others down ; for, when there are but two or three in this part of the house, there sometimes comes a spirit ; and in that case, we ourselves should be badly off.

Mar. What is it you tell me about your spirits ?

Alf. Yes ; it is true. At first you hear a noise, and then a phantom with a lighted torch stalks by, and then the room seems all on fire. [*He starts back, as if afraid.*] Methinks I see it now.

Mar. [*a little frightened.*] See what ?—O lord !—What can bring the phantom here ?

Alf. [*drawing Martin toward a corner, and whispering to him.*] The reason, as we are told by the neighbors, is this : there was a miser lived here

formerly, and he was robbed one night of all his money. In despair he cut his throat, and now, it is said, from time to time his ghost appears.

Mar. [*trembling.*] O ho, I'll stay no longer here, unless you procure company.

Alf. But recollect how brave you were just now.

Mar. You must not fancy I'm afraid :—but—but—but—but—I'll go fetch my mask.

Alf. Do ; I'll prepare things here. What pleasure we shall have ;

Mar. [*with a grin.*] O enough to make one die with laughing.

Alf. They'll be finely frightened.

Mar. That they will ! and therefore I'll make haste. I'm home, and back again—You'll see how soon. [*Martin goes out.*]

Alf. Ah ha ! you want to frighten others, and are never terrified yourself ! Well, I've thought of something that will daunt you, or I am much mistaken.

SCENE II. *Alfred, Viola, Clara, Rosamond, Beatrice, and the elder Danby.*

Vio. We saw Martin run across the street this moment ; what's the matter ? Have you quarrelled ?

Alf. Quite the contrary ; he thinks I am his best friend. I have pretended to go shares with him in a trick he wants to play upon the little children ; but he will only trick himself, and never show his face here a third time.

Vio. Well, what is your project ?

Alf. You shall soon know. At present I have

no time to lose, for every thing must be in readiness at his return ; therefore, ladies, I will request permission to be absent for about five minutes.

Rosa. Yes, go ; but don't stay longer. We are impatient to know your design.

Alf. I shall consider it my duty to inform you perhaps, as soon as preparations are made. With your leave, therefore, once more. [*He goes out.*]

Vio. Ah ! ah ! ah !—Two pretty fellows got together ! We shall see what good comes out between them ! one's well worth the other.

Elder D. O, Miss Viola, do not thus dishonor my friend your brother, by coupling him and this wicked Martin together.

Bea. You are in the right, Danby. One is all politeness, and the other truly savage.

Cla. Savage, however, as Martin is, I venture to say that Alfred will be found his master.

Rosa. What a piece of service would Alfred do, could he clear the house of such a fellow ! We shall have no pleasure this evening, if he stay among us.

Vio. I am afraid Alfred will proceed too far, and think himself justified in doing any thing against this Martin.

Elder D. He can never do enough ; and, although his scheme should be a little hard upon Martin, there will be instruction as well as reproof in it ; it is the greatest service one can do him : and even his father, I am persuaded, will be pleased with Alfred, when he hears what pains he has taken to

reclaim his son. Alas ! he would perhaps part with half his fortune, to render Martin like him.

Bea. Therefore, Viola, don't you attempt to thwart your brother's good intentions.

Vio. My dear Beatrice, I am very awkwardly situated. I am acting instead of my mother, and cannot possibly let any thing go forward, which she would disapprove.

Bea. Let Alfred have his own way. We will take the blame of what he does upon ourselves.

Cla. Yes, let him, sister. War, I say, eternal war with the wicked ?

Alf. [*returning joyfully.*] I have settled every thing to my mind, and Martin may appear whenever he pleases. We'll receive him.

Vio. But I hope you'll tell me——

Rosa. Yes, we'll be in the plot too ; and assist you, if we can.

Alf. No, ladies ; it is not necessary. There's a little violence, I must acknowledge, in my plot ; and therefore you ought not to be parties. I've arranged every thing with Roger in the stable. He conceives my meaning clearly, and will second it with his usual dexterity.

Vio. But still you do not acquaint me——

Alf. This is all you need know of the contrivance. We will now play Blindman's Buff, that Martin may suspect nothing on his return. I'll suffer myself to be caught, and he or she who blinds me must take care that I have an opportunity of seeing through the handkerchief and fixing upon

Martin. After I have blinded him, you shall steal into the closet, taking away the lights, and leaving us together. When I want your aid, I'll call you.

Elder D. But if Martin should proceed to thresh you in your tête-a-tête ?

Alf. Proceed to thresh me ! You observed how easily I handled him. I am not afraid of him, for I have found him to be an arrant coward. So that is fixed : but first we must have both the little ones down stairs, or Martin will go up and frighten them whilst we are talking here together. So pray, sister, [*to Clara*] go and bring them down.

Cl. Yes, with pleasure. [*She goes out.*]

Vio. Brother, I'm not certain I should permit—

Bea. What is the matter, Viola ? Let him do as he pleases.

Alf. Yes, sister, rely on my discretion. You know I do not like mischief for the sake of mischief. He shall not have half the punishment he merits, but escape with a little frightening : that is all the harm I mean to do him.

Vio. Well, Alfred, on your promise of discretion—

Alf. I promise no less. Now let us make haste and put the things in order, that all may be in readiness when he comes.

[*They put away the chairs and table. Clara in the mean time comes down with Laura and Danby.*]

Alf. [*to Laura and Danby.*] Come, my little friends, into this closet ; but take care, and make no noise, or Martin very possibly will hear you.

Cl. I will conduct them. There's a book of pic-

tures in the closet : and I'll stay and show them such as they wish.

Lau. I thought the tea was ready, May we not stay here with you till it comes in ?

Alf. I'll call you when the servant brings it ; but at present you must go into the closet ; *Martin* wants to frighten you, and I'll not let him.

Younger D. Ye-e-e-e-s ; let's go, my de-e-e-e-ar.

[*Clara* takes a lamp, and goes with them into the closet.

Alf. We comprehend, I fancy, what we are to do. My eyes are not to be wholly covered, and, whenever I give the signal, you must take away the lights, go into the closet, and remain perfectly silent.

Rosa. Yes, we understand.

Alf. I believe I hear him coming. Hush ! hush !

[*He* listens at the door.

Rosa. I'll begin ; who takes my handkerchief ?

[*Beatrice* blinds *Rosamond*, and they commence the sport.

SCENE III. *Alfred, Viola, Rosamond, Beatrice, elder Danby, and Martin.*

[*Martin*, as he enters, pinches *Rosamond* ; she throws out her hands, and lays hold of him.

Rosa. It is master *Martin*. I well know him by his pinching me.

Alf. It is *Martin* ; but he was not in the play. You must begin again.

Mar. Undoubtedly ; *Alfred* is in the right.

Rosa. Well, be it so : but, if I again catch you, it shall be all fair. Remember, I have warned you.

Mar. O yes. [*He takes Alfred aside, and lets him see a little of the mask.*] What think you of it ?

Alf. [*feigning to be frightened.*] O how horrible ? I should certainly be terrified at seeing it myself. Well, hide it carefully ; we'll play a little, and then slip away unperceived.

Mar. [*whispering Alf.*] Yes, we will ; but I must, first of all, do something that may vex the ladies.

Alf. [*whispering to Martin.*] I'll go up to Rosamond and turn her round ; if she catch me, she'll guess your name, and must blind again.

Mar. [*whispering to Alfred.*] Good ! good ! I'll have a little sport with her.

Beat. Well ; when will you have told each other all your secrets ? Two fine gentlemen ! don't you see the game stands still ?

Mar. You need not wait for us : we're ready.

Alf. [*keeping near Rosamond, as if he intended to pull her by the gown, and, seeing Martin go to bring a chair, says aside,*] Now, Rosamond, I'll put myself in your way.

[Martin brings a chair, and places it in such a manner that Rosamond will tumble over it ; but Alfred removes the chair, and places himself in its stead, upon his hands and feet, with much shuffling, that Rosamond may hear him. She slides along, as if at hazard, encounters Alfred, stoops and seizes him.

Rosa. [*after having felt about his cape and wrists, and seeming doubtful.*] It is Alfred.

Alf. [*in appearance disconcerted.*] Yes, indeed ; I'm taken. What ill luck to be caught so soon!

Rosa. [*pulling off the bandage.*] O ho ! you

wanted to throw me down ! I thought such tricks belonged only to Martin ; but it shall not be long before I take revenge.

[She covers Alfred's eyes, so that he can slightly see persons ; leads him toward the middle of the room ; and then, as is the custom of the game, asks him,

How many horses has your father in his stable ?

Alf. Three ; black, white, and grey.

Rosa. Turn about three times, and catch whom you may.

[Alfred gropes about the room, and permits himself to be jostled from place to place. Rosamond particularly pesters him ; he pretends to follow her, but suddenly turns round and catches Martin.

Alf. Ah, ha ! I've got you ! have I ? It is a boy. It's Martin ! [*Pulling off the handkerchief.*] Yes ; I'm not mistaken.

Mar. [*whispering to Alfred.*] Why catch me ?

Alf. [*whispering Martin.*] Don't mind it. You shall catch Danby. I'll push him towards you.

Mar. [*whispering Alfred.*] Do ; and you shall see how I'll make him squeak. I'll pinch him till the very blood spins out.

[Alfred begins to cover Martin's eyes, and gives the company a nod, as he had previously planned. Danby, assisted by the ladies, takes away the lights, and all together go quietly into an adjoining closet.

Elder D. [*before he goes into the closet.*] Well ; have you finish'd ? Make haste. You take a deal of time. What mischief are you whispering to each other ?



[At this instant the groom presents himself at the door, with a lighted torch in one hand, and a stick in the other, with a large full wig upon the top of it. He is covered from head to foot with Mr. Milner's gown, which trails along upon the floor behind him. Alfred beckons him to stop one moment at the entrance, while he is blinding Martin.]

Alf. [putting Martin in the middle of the room.]
How many horses has your father in his stable ?

Mar. Three ; black, white, and grey.

Alf. Turn about—[pretending to be angry with the company.] Pray be quiet, young ladies, and

don't quit your places till the game's begun—Turn about three times, and catch whom you may.

[While Martin turns about, Alfred runs to get the speaking-trumpet, beckons the groom to advance and untie a huge cart-chain he has about his waist, which, falling, makes a hideous clanking, and then cries out lustily himself,—]

The ghost ! the ghost ! Run, Martin, for your life.

[Alfred slams and shuts the door violently ; hides himself behind the ghost ; and, speaking very loudly through the trumpet, says,—]

'Tis you, then, that come to steal my treasure !

Mar. [*shivering violently, and without courage to remove the bandage.*] Fire ! fire ! Danby ! Where are you, Alfred ? Murder ! murder ! Rosamond !

Alf. [*speaking through the trumpet.*] I've scared them away. Pull off your bandage, and look at me.

[Martin, without pulling off the bandage, puts both hands before his face, retiring as the ghost advances towards him.]

Alf. Pull it off, I say——

[Martin pulls down the bandage, which falls about his neck. At first he dares not lift his eyes : but at last, when he observes the ghost, he gives a shriek, and has not power to move.]

Alf. I know you well ; your name is Martin.

[Martin, hearing these words, runs up and down, to escape : he finds the door fastened, falls upon his knees, holds out his hands in a supplicating attitude, and turns away his head.]

Alf. What, you think to escape, do you ?

Mar. [after several efforts.] I have done nothing to you. You were never robbed by me.

Alf. Never robbed by you? You're capable of any villainy! Who is it squirts at people in the street? who fastens rabbits' tails behind their backs? Who fishes for their wigs? Who lames poor dogs and cats? Who sticks needles in chairs to wound his friends? And who has in his pocket even now a mask, with which to frighten two little children?

Mar. I have done all this! indeed I own it! but for heaven's sake pardon me, and I'll do so no more.

Alf. Who will answer for you?

Mar. Those you've scared away, if you'll call them.

Alf. Do you promise?

Mar. Yes; upon my honor.

Alf. Well, I take pity on you; but remember, were it my pleasure, I might easily fly away with you through the window.

[The phantom shakes his torch, which gives a glare like lightning, and then vanishes through the door. The frightened Martin falls on the floor, flat upon his face.]

SCENE THE LAST. *Martin, Alfred, the Groom, and Mr. Milner.*

Mr. M. [entering with a lamp in his hand.] What is all this disturbance?

Mar. [without looking up.] Is it I who make it? Pray, Mr. Ghost, don't come near me!

Mr. M. [perceiving Martin on the floor.] Who can this be?

Mar. You know me well enough, and have already taken pity on me.

Mr.M. I have already taken pity on you !

Mar. It was not I that robbed you.

Mr.M. Robbed me ! What does all this mean, master Martin ?

Mar. Yes ; that's my name, good ghost ; so pray don't hurt me.

Mr.M. I'm amazed ! Why are you in such a posture ? [*Puts down his lamp, holds out his hand, and lifts Martin from the floor.*]

Mar. [*struggling at first, but finally knowing Mr.M.*] Mr. Milner, is it you, sir ? [*His features brighten.*] He's gone, then, is he ? [*He looks round, sees the ghost, and turns away again.*] There he stands !—the phantom ! don't you see him ?

[*Alfred leads the children from the closet. Laura and Danby are frightened at the phantom ; but the rest burst into a laugh.*]

Mr.M. Well ! what does all this mean ?

Alf. [*coming forward.*] Let me explain the whole, father. This phantom is your groom ; and we have dressed him in your wig and gown.

Groom. [*letting his disguise fall.*] Yes, sir, it is I.

Mr.M. A wicked and sorry sort of sport this !

Alf. True, father ; but ask the company if master Martin has not well deserved to be thus frightened. He designed to terrify Laura and Danby : I only wished to hinder him. Let him only show the horrible mask he has in his pocket.

Mr.M. [*to Martin.*] Is this true ?

Mar. [*giving him the mask.*] I can't deny it : here it is, sir.

Mr. M. You have then richly deserved this treatment ?

Rosa. It was we that persuaded Miss Viola to permit her brother to put in execution this device for the punishment of Martin.

Beat. You are still unacquainted, sir, with all the other wicked tricks he meant to play us !

Mr. M. [*to Martin.*] Is it thus, sir, you announce yourself, the first time you set foot within my doors ? You have been disrespectful to me in the persons of my children, who were pleased to think you would become an agreeable guest. You have been disrespectful to these ladies, whom I need not say you should have honored and regarded. So begone ! Your father, when he knows that you have been thus turned out of doors for your misconduct, will see how necessary it is to correct the vices of your heart. Whatever he may do, I will not permit you, by your vile and detestable example, to contaminate the virtuous disposition of those under my care. Go, and never let me see you here again ! [*Martin is confounded, and withdraws.*] — And you, my young friends, altho' the circumstances of the case may, very possibly, excuse what you have done,—yet, for the future, never indulge yourselves in such cruel sport. The fears, with which children are affected, in such a tender age as yours, may possibly be followed by the worst of consequences during life,—insanity or idiotcy. Avenge yourselves upon the wicked by behaving better to them

than they have conducted themselves towards you, or by avoiding as far as possible all association with them ; and remember, from the wicked example Martin has afforded you, that, by plotting harm against others, you will often bring it upon your own heads.

THE CONJURING BIRD.

A DRAMA, IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS

COUNTESS OF GLENALVON.	GABRIEL,	} <i>Friends of Julia and Augustus.</i>
AUGUSTUS, <i>her Son.</i>	LUCIUS,	
JULIA, <i>her Daughter.</i>	SOPHIA,	
GEORGE ODDLY, <i>a Nobleman's Son.</i>	JENNY,	} <i>Servants to the Countess.</i>
ELIZA, <i>his Sister.</i>	ROBERT,	

The SCENE is at the country-house of the Countess, in two rooms that open into the garden.

SCENE I.

Jenny, at a table, reckoning over a set of silver counters.

T is all lost labor to stand counting in this manner. I can make no more than ninety-four; and yet there should be a hundred. I think there never was a house like this for hair-brained children; for, wherever they put their fingers, one may be sure they will jumble the whole house together, if they do not lose half the things. I must look for these counters in every nook and corner.

Enter the Countess.

Coun. You seem uneasy, Jenny. What is lost?

Jen. Your ladyship's best counters.

Coun. Do you not see them on the table?

Jen. Yes, madam; but the number is incomplete.

Coun. That should not be.

Jen. There are no less than six wanting. Were there not a hundred of them, my lady?

Coun. Yes; you know it as well as I.

Jen. There are now only ninety-four.

Coun. [*after counting them.*] There are indeed no more; and yet last night the number was complete. I put them away, when we stopt playing. What caused you now to come and count them?

Jen. Because, as I passed the door, I saw that the children had been playing with them.

Coun. Yet I had ordered absolutely that they should not be touched. The children have ivory ones; who could have given them these?

Jen. Themselves.

Coun. Where are they?

Jen. In the garden, with their little visitors.

Coun. Call Julia here.—But stay, have none been here but Julia and Augustus?

Jen. Yes, their friends; and who can tell——

Coun. What, Jenny! can you possibly suspect——

Jen. I will answer for your children, and the three young Davenports, please your ladyship, as if they were myself.

Coun. And not the others?

Jen. I do not know them well enough.

Coun. What, Jenny, two such children as the Hon. Mr. Oddly and his sister ?

Jen. Here comes miss Julia.

Enter Julia.

Coun. Who told you, miss, to use my silver counters ? Did I not forbid you to play with them ?

Jul. It was not my fault, mother.

Coun. Whose then, pray ?

Jul. George Oddly's and his sister's. I had the ivory counters, when they asked me if I meant to play with them, as they never had such at home, and must have better ; and proceeded to open all the drawers and closets till they found them.

Coun. Why did you not mention that I would not let you use them ?

Jul. They would not hear me. I believe they would have beat us, had we not surrendered them.

Jen. Upon my word ! These children, as it seems, are charmingly brought up !

Coun. You should at least have counted them when you left off playing.

Jul. That was what I intended. But, when I had counted to twenty-four, George Oddly snatched them from me, put them up pell-mell, and dragged us into the garden with him.

Coun. Do you know that six are missing ?

Jul. Surely not, mother !

Coun. How ! surely ! when I have told you ! See now whether I can trust you ! You know it was your duty to take care of them.

Jul. I was confounded, dear mother. These chil-

dren were so mischievous, I was compelled to have my eye continually upon them, as I thought they might break your china. I was obliged frequently to follow them about the room : they may have thrown the counters into some corner or other.

Coun. I must certainly have them found.

Jen. I know of but one way, madam. Were I you, I would turn the little masters' pockets inside out, before they left the house.

Coun. Fie, Jenny ! would you have me affront their parents ?

Jul. O, I am sure, mother, not one among them can have taken the counters.

Coun. So I think ; but children of their age may be a little giddy-headed. Go to them, Julia, and ask politely if any one among them may not, by mistake, have put them in his pocket. Your commission is a nice one, and requires a little management. Take care not to offend them by insinuating that you think any one capable of taking them purposely.

Jul. I shall take care, mother.

Coun. Accuse yourself of negligence, and tell them that I shall blame you, if they are not found.

Jul. I understand.

Coun. And, as you pass, bid Robert come here.

Jul. I will, mother.

SCENE II. *Countess and Jenny.*

Jen. [*who had been employed in searching round the room.*] I will answer for it, they are not here ; there is not a corner that I have not searched.

Coun. This ought not to happen in my house.

I dread the discovery, but must know by what means they have vanished.

Enter Robert.

Rob. What is your pleasure, my lady ?

Coun. To inform you, Robert, that I have lost six silver counters.

Rob. Do you suspect me of taking them, madam ?

Coun. No, Robert, I am well acquainted with your honesty. But I supposed you might have crossed the room, and seen them on some chair or elsewhere.

Rob. Counters on a chair ?

Coun. I know, that is not a proper place for counters ; but the children had been playing with them, and might inconsiderately have left them in some corner, where you might have seen them.

Rob. No, my lady, I have not.

Coun. I am sorry for it, and know not how to find them. They must have been lost since this morning, as I counted them myself last night. But you can look about the room.

Jen. Your ladyship has seen how I have been searching. Servants are badly off, when any thing is lost about a house. However honest they may be, they are constantly suspected.

Coun. Very likely ; but the honest servant will on this occasion pardon me, if I include her in my search of the dishonest.

Rob. You may first examine me, my lady. Rogues are always the first to be displeased when they are suspected.

Jen. Thank heaven, I have no fear of that sort! but it cannot be a matter of indifference in the honest servant, when a thief is in the house.

Coun. Imagine yourself in my place; what would you do? Think, Robert.

Rob. Do, my lady? A thought this moment strikes me; and if I have leave to put it in execution, I engage to find the counters.

Cou. You must not give any one occasion to suppose himself suspected. What do you intend to do?

Rob. I cannot at present explain. A single syllable might spoil the scheme. I wish your ladyship to bring the children all together into the adjoining room. I promise you, the thief, if there is any thief among them, shall betray himself.

Coun. I am doubtful about giving permission——

Rob. You may trust me, madam. Be assured that no person except the guilty one shall have reason to complain; and him, to clear the innocent, I dare believe, you would not wish to spare.

Coun. Well, Robert, as I am confident of your prudence, I rely upon it in this urgency.

Rob. Good, my lady! I will now begin conjuring. It is quite simple, and you need not fear. [*Exit.*]

Jen. My lady—did he not say something about conjuring? If I did not know myself innocent, I should be frightened out of my wits.

Coun. Don't be a simpleton, Jenny!

Enter Augustus.

Well, Augustus? You seem big with something! Have you brought the counters with you?

Aug. No, mother ; I have just learnt that six are lost. My sister told us so this moment.

Coun. And how was the intelligence received ?

Aug. We were exceedingly surprised. The two Davenports particularly, and their sister, want to come and plead their innocence before you.

Coun. Plead ! they are the last that I should suspect of such a deed. And master Oddly——

Aug. He is furious ; and told Julia, that, to look upon him as a thief, was a poor reception.

Coun. Julia was not rude, I hope, in delivering my message to the company ?

Aug. No, mother ; quite otherwise. She spoke with great politeness.

Coun. Then why was master Oddly angry ? There was nothing disrespectful in my message.

Aug. I cannot tell the reason ; Eliza drew him privately aside ; but he would not condescend to hear her. He is determined to go home ; his cap however is in this room, he will come for it, and declares that he will not remain a minute in the house. He threatens to complain to his father.

Coun. Positively he must not go. I will tell his lordship the whole affair myself when he comes to take his children home.

Aug. The rest wish for permission to appear and justify themselves.

Coun. There is no necessity. I only wished to know if they could give me any information of the counters. All these children are so well brought up, I could not venture to accuse them of a theft.

But I am well acquainted with the whims of youth. They *will* see every thing, and finger every thing ; and, from mere thoughtlessness, might put a thing into their pocket, without any criminal intention.

Aug. Certainly they might, mother ; as I did, you remember, when I took up my sister's purse through mistake, and was carrying it away.

Coun. But softly ! here they are. Go, Jenny, and inquire how Robert progresses.

SCENE III. *Countess, Augustus, Julia, George Oddly, Eliza, Gabriel, Lucius, Sophia.*

Coun. Well, how fare you, my little friends ? I am glad to see you here.

Geo. Miss Julia has just informed us, that your ladyship has lost six counters of the number with which, unluckily, we were playing. I am sorry for it ; but could not have thought your ladyship would have suspected any one of us of having taken them. At least I can assure you, for my sister and myself, that we know nothing about them.

Coun. O, forbid that I should suspect such well-bred children as I look upon you to be. Did Julia tell you that I supposed you had the counters ?

Eli. No, my lady ; all she did was to inquire if we had not brought them out through inattention, or to play a little longer with them in the garden.

Coun. Which you might very innocently have done. It is Julia alone that I blame in the affair, because she did not let you have *her* counters.

Gab. She intended, I believe, so to do.

Luc. I should never dare to show my face again, if I had taken the value of a pin.

Sophia. [*emptying her pockets.*] See, my lady, I have nothing here.

Coun. My dear children, I have already told you that I am far from suspecting any of you to have them, when you say you have not. They are certainly of no great value ; yet, as particular favorites, I confess their loss affects me.

Geo. Were they worth only a straw, they are your ladyship's, and ought not to be missing. But you know there are such things as servants ; and they are not always very honest. It is not the first time that we have suspected them at home.

Jul. But it is the first time any thing of the kind has happened in our house, dear Mr. Oddly.

Aug. I would answer for our servants, men and women.

Coun. I have trusted them a long time ; but if you, sir, [*to George,*] have made any observations, pray let me know them.

Geo. O no ! but, when we went into the garden, did not—what is her name—the housemaid, enter ?

Coun. Jenny ! O, I do not fear her. During the six years she has lived with me she might easily have taken many things of value had she been dishonest.

Geo. Did not your old footman come in ? I do not like his looks ; and should not choose to meet him in a lane at night.

Coun. Fie ! what makes you suspect honest

Robert ? He was my father-in-law's confidential servant, and has been much longer in the family than even I myself. If *he* could possibly turn pilferer, neither you nor I could know whom we might trust.

Geo. It is not unlikely, then, that some one got into the room when we were gone.

Coun. That is not unlikely ; I will go and inquire about it. Amuse yourselves till I come back.

Geor. No, madam ; after what has passed, I cannot stay here any longer. Augustus, can you tell me where they have put my cap ?

Aug. It is taken with the others to be brushed ; it will be brought to you.

Geo. I must have it instantly.

Eli. Father intends coming in the carriage for us. Won't you stay a little till he comes ?

Coun. I cannot possibly let you go home on foot. You would have upwards of three miles to walk. Stay here till I return ; I will not detain you long.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *Augustus, Julia, George Oddly, Eliza, Gabriel, Lucius, Sophia.*

Geo. I am much astonished that your mother has such thoughts of us ! We steal her counters !

Jul. Sir, she entertains no such thoughts. She may have supposed that we might have put them, without thought, into our pockets. I might as unintentionally have taken them in this way, as yourself, or any other person ; but to *steal* ! she did not mention the word, nor one of like meaning.

Geo. Had there been none here but vulgar children, she might well have entertained suspicion ; but she ought now to make some difference.

Gab. I perceive, you speak of us, sir ; your looks inform me so. But allow me to inform you, in my turn, that it is a person's manners and principles, and not his birth, that makes him truly noble.

Geo. How these tradesmen talk about their manners ! You are very happy that there are so few children hereabout, and that Augustus and myself are forced to make you our companions, or have no diversion. If you lived in London, you would have no such honor, notwithstanding your fine manners.

Aug. Speak for yourself, sir ; in London too, just as here, I should be proud to entertain my little friends.

Jul. Yes, certainly. They give us as good examples as such whipper-snapper noblemen as you.

Eli. You have deserved this, brother. You first descended to personality.

Geo. And you too against me ? You think as I do, but you will not confess it. Don't you remember what mother said on the subject of familiarity with those beneath us ? ' Never mix with vulgar children : in the lower ranks of life you will always have low thoughts.'

Aug. And can you suspect that my friends are capable of being thieves ?

Gab. Did we approach the table ?

So. No ; I saw George take the counters, and look at them, I suppose half a dozen times.

[George attempts to strike her. Augustus and Gabriel hold his hands.

Aug. Softly ! You will have to deal with me else.

Gab. No, no, my friend. I thank you, but I can take care of my sister. Let him even threaten her. I am no more frightened at his size than his title.

Geo. It is far beneath me to dispute with traders.

Jul. I hope then it is far beneath you likewise to strike a little girl.

Geo. I shall not permit her to insult me.

Eli. She would certainly done much better, had she been silent.

Jul. But, being a child, she might be pardoned ; and particularly when she spoke the truth.

Gab. My sister said that you took the counters and looked at them ; that was all. And this certainly is true. Did she say any thing more ?

Geo. I shall not even condescend to answer.

Gab. You cannot adopt a better resolution, whilst you have no better answers to make.

Enter Countess.

Conn. What is the cause of all this ? I will have no quarrels here !

Geo. My lady, I expect you will do me justice on these little folks !

Coun. Folks ! folks ! who are they ? I am not accustomed to call visitors here by such names.

Aug. George is angry, mother, because we were not in a humor to endure his airs.

Jul. He thought he should have had a company of dukes at least for playfellows.

Gab. And imagines that we ought to be suspected of theft, rather than a nobleman.

Luc. As if we had not characters to support, as well as himself !

So. Ay, and would have beaten me, if Gabriel had not taught him better.

Coun. Why, surely ! it is not possible !

Eli. To say the truth, my brother is too hasty.

Coun. Vivacity becomes his age very well ; but no one should be proud, quarrelsome, or rash. Here is Robert.

Enter Robert, with a basket, covered with a napkin.

Rob. There is no more to be said, my lady. Every body in the house is innocent, and I am glad to hear it ; but, for the satisfaction of the company, I will introduce my rooster, who, you must know, is a conjurer. [*Placing the basket on the table.*]

So. [*jumping for joy.*] O, a cock ! a cock !

Rob. Yes, nothing more ; for, look here ! [*He lifts up a napkin in the basket, so that Sophia and the rest discern the bird's head, neck, and crest.*] Just like others, except that my bird has not his equal in the world for knowledge : why, he will tell me things which no person can possibly know. If a single straw, and nothing else, is missing, I need only run and have a consultation with him : he will be sure to know who stole it.

Jul. You can then find our counters, can you ?

Rob. Can I ? Why, miss, at the alehouse, last Christmas, I lost my snuff-box ; so what did I but



go and fetch my pretty bird, who let me know that the groom had it : and I think you recollect, he broke his leg about a fortnight afterward.

So. He can talk then ?

Rob. Yes, like other cocks : ‘ *Cock-a-raw-aw.*’ Upon which, I understand him just as if it were you that spoke to me.

Jul. You never told us all this before.

Rob. Because you never lost any thing before.

Cou. Well, a truce to this conversation, and begin.

Rob. Not quite so fast, my lady. I must perform my conjuring in the dark.

Coun. A very easy matter. You need only close the outside shutters. [*Exit Robert.*]

SCENE V. *Countess, Augustus, Julia, George Oddly, Eliza, Gabriel, Lucius, Sophia.*

[The children lift up a corner of the napkin, excepting George, who appears embarrassed.]

Aug. [*looking earnestly at the bird.*] This cock seems supernatural, I fancy. How his eyes shine !

Jul. And his comb, how red it looks ! my patience, how it shakes upon his head !

So. Do you imagine that it has as much knowledge as Robert says ?

Luc. Father has often told us what we ought to think of such strange stories.

Gab. Robert is a cunning sportsman ; and I am sure can make birds hold their tongues much better with his fowling-piece, than teach a cock to talk by virtue of his wand.

Eli. Who knows ! my governess has told me many wondrous things of conjuration, and all that.

Geo. I wonder, sister, you can listen to such stories !

Coun. I am glad you have these notions of the matter, and should like to laugh at Robert for his folly. What simplicity ! a cock discover thieves !

Geo. [*forcing a smile.*] I fancy we shall have a deal of laughing very shortly. [*The shutters are suddenly closed.*] But why close the shutters ? [*with uneasiness.*] I do not like darkness.

Jul. If the cock cannot see, he will never find out the thief. Will he, mother ?

Coun. Well asked ; for I cannot tell you.

So. If I knew how, I should like to make him speak. Come, pretty little cock, say something.—See how dark it is.—Look out a little.—He does not speak a word !

Jul. The reason is, I suppose, he will obey his master only.

Enter Robert.

Coun. Well, Robert, as you have shut out the day-light, I suppose you are now satisfied ?

Rob. Yes, my lady, every thing is as it should be. And so now, let those remain that have not stolen the counters ; but, if any one is guilty, let that one go out. — What, all remain !

Geo. How cunning !

Rob. I see clearly then that I must employ my art.
[*He waves his wand, and draws a circle on the floor ; pronouncing some unintelligible words.*]

That's well ! So now, my pretty cock, take heed ;

And tell us who are rogues indeed.

Come now, my little ladies and gentlemen, every one of you, in turn, lift up the napkin here, and, with your right hand, do you see, draw it gently across the back of Chanticleer. You will hear his music, when the thief once puts his hand upon him : but do not lift the cloth too high ; only just high enough to let your hand pass under it.

So now, my pretty cock, take heed ;

And tell us who are rogues indeed.

Well ! will none of you begin ?

Coun. What, every one afraid ? Why, one would think you all guilty, at this rate !

So. I am the youngest, but I will set a good example. [*She lifts up the cloth, and passes her hand twice down the bird's back.*] Do you see, the cock does not speak. It is not I that took the counters.

Rob. Very well. Now stand in this place, with your hand behind you. Is it so ?

So. Feel, feel.

Rob. That is right. Now you, sir. [*To Aug.*]

Aug. O, I fear as little as Sophia—There—he has not spoke.. Must I too hold my hand behind me ?

Rob. Certainly ; and every one. Come here by this young lady. Well, another.

Jul. I will go next. [*She strokes him.*] If he had said a word, he would have been a story-teller.

Rob. Stand here by your brother. Who's next ?

Eli. It is my turn now. [*She strokes him.*] Mute as a mackerel. Yet I stroked him four times over.

Rob. Are your right hands all behind you ? Do not forget that part.

Gab. [*to George,*] I will follow you.

Geo. As if I'd have to do with such child's play !

Coun. You would not surely spoil our sport ? A little complaisance, pray, Mr. Oddly.

Geo. If that is all, I have no objection. [*He puts his hand under the cloth.*] There—he has not spoke to me, altho' I have stroked him more than others.

Rob. Well, sir, stand here, with the rest ; and keep your hand behind you.

So. There are none left but my brothers, who have not tried. It is one of them ! No ; I cannot think

so. [*Gabriel and Lucius imitate the others ; and the children burst into a loud laugh.*]

Luc. And where is the thief ? Why, no where.

Coun. Robert, you should send your cock to Norwood ; he is not cunning enough ; and all this while he has not found my counters.

Rob. This confounds me, I acknowledge. For a little while, however, patience ; do not stir. Stand still, I say. They are just like so much quicksilver ! My circle, I think, must have been imperfect. I will bring a light, and examine. I pray your ladyship, let no one quit his place. [*Exit.*]

Geo. I knew beforehand how all this would end. Stupid nonsense !

So. Why, this cock is no wiser than his master.

Eli. Truly, I am glad to see him caught.

Jul. What does Robert design to do, mother, when he has brought the light ?

Coun. He will show us.

So. I should like to see the learned cock now. He will scarcely hold up his head, I suppose, for shame.

Enter Robert, with a lamp.

Rob. [*going to Sophia.*] Come, miss, let me see your little hand. [*She holds out the left.*] Not this, but that behind you. Good !

So. [*looking at her hand, and crying out*] O, what a hand I have ! as black as any coal ! And will it be always so ?

Rob. Do not be frightened, little miss ! I will speak about it to my cock, and you shall have both hands as white as snow.

[The children have not patience to wait, but all look together at their right hands, and instantly cry out.]

Aug. How black my fingers are too !

Jul. And mine likewise ! What does Robert mean by this ?

Eli. I would twist the creature's neck, if I had him.

Gab. My wristbands have come in for a little of it !

Luc. My hand looks as if it were painted !

Geo. [*lifting his hands in triumph.*] But see mine ! There is none of the company that has a hand fit to look at, except me.

Rob. [*taking hold of George by the arm.*] Then, sir, you have stolen the counters. Give them up, young gentleman, this instant ; or I will search your pockets, and then blacken you all over !

Eli. Blacken him ! O, brother ! if you have the counters, give them up this moment.

Coun. Take care, Robert, what you say !

Rob. I am sure he has them. So deliver the counters this moment, or expect to have a countenance as grimy as the blackest negro's.

Geo. [*turning pale, and trembling.*] Is it possible that I should have put them in my pocket, and not thought what I was about. [*He feels about himself.*] I recollect I had them in my hand. [*He seems surprised at finding them thrust into a corner of his vest pocket.*] Dear me ! they are here indeed ! Who would have thought it ? [*All the children look at each other with surprise, while George stands confounded.*]

Coun. Robert, take away your cock and candle,

and open the shutters. Take care [*in a whisper*] not to tell how you found the counters.

Rob. I will, my lady. [*Exit.*]

Coun. Go, my little friends, into the next room. You will find soap and water there to wash your hands. Take care, and do not wet your clothes.

So. No; but if this black should not come off?

Coun. It is nothing but a little ivory black, and water will remove it. You, sir, [*to Geo.*] as your hands are clean, may stay with me. [*Ex. children.*]

Coun. Well then, my haughty little gentleman! is it possible you could be guilty of so infamous an action? You that, scarcely a quarter of an hour ago, looked down with scorn upon the children of a reputable, worthy tradesman, and supposed your quality disgraced by being found in their company! They have at present their revenge, since they may call you, and with justice, a thief!

Geo. Pray pardon me, my lady!—I was playing with the counters—and, without considering at the moment, must have put them into my pocket. I have no other method of accounting for their being found in my possession.

Coun. Pitiful, vile excuse! that aggravates your fault! At such a tender age as yours, I could not have imagined any one possessed such effrontery.

Geo. Believe me, madam, I had no bad design! I took them without meaning so to do, and afterwards concealed the matter, from my dread of being taken for a thief.

Coun. But, after I had bid my daughter make

inquiry for them with such delicacy, you might easily have seemed to search your pockets, and restored them without blushing. Your proceeding would then have been looked upon as nothing but inadvertency.

Geo. I did not think of that, my lady.

Coun. What then did you think, when you durst drop hints that possibly my honest servants might have taken them? or that my children's little friends were objects of suspicion? What were your ideas when you made believe to stroke the cock?

Geo. But, madam, I *did* stroke him.

Coun. Silence, you wicked wretch!—for that name is not too bad for your deservings. Happily, as yet, you have not sufficient cunning to conceal your wicked actions. *You did stroke the cock!* Is that your assertion? Do you not see that, if you had, you would have blacked your hands as well as all the others, Robert having smeared the bird with a black composition! Your companions were not in the least afraid to stroke him, as their consciences did not reproach them for the theft; but as for you, the apprehension lest the servant's artifice might really be conjuration, awed you; and the means that you chose, to avoid detection, have betrayed you. O, how politic you thought yourself in only pretending, as you did, to stroke the cock! but you would have found honesty much better policy. You deserve that I should tell your father of your behavior, when he comes for you.

Geo. (falling on his knees.) O, no! pray, my

lady, I beseech you! He would beat me—he would tread me under foot!

Coun. And it would be better that he should do so, than bring up a monster to disgrace him at some future period. If, in the season of infancy, as I may call it, you can commit so great a crime, of what horrid depravity may you not finally be guilty?

Geo. Ah, madam, pardon me for pity's sake, and never——

Coun. Doubtless you have often made these promises to others; for this is hardly your first transgression. Every circumstance confirms it. So much falsity and impudence——

Geo. Then hear me, my good lady! if you ever learn in future that I make free with any thing whatever that is not mine——

Coun. Inform me, in the first place, what you intended to do with six counters? You could not suppose you would have an opportunity of using them, they would have been instantly known. You meant to sell them for money?

Geo. No, madam, believe me! I was pleased with looking at them. I supposed that no one would remember having seen them elsewhere, and on that account I secreted them.

Cou. And how could you desire to have another's property? Is this your first offence? Confess!

Geo. [*hiding his face.*] O no, indeed, my lady. I have often been a thief at home; but, having never been suspected there, I hoped to have the same good fortune here.

Coun. A very wicked mode of reasoning ! For, granting that no one on earth suspected you, do you not know that God sees and punishes whatever is done amiss ? Perhaps however this event is for your benefit ; and you will be more likely to amend, when you have been once punished as you merit.

Geo. Let it be by you, my lady, or by any one, rather than by my father. Let him know nothing of the matter, I conjure you. Tell it, if you please, to my mother, but keep the matter from his knowledge.

Coun. There again ! You would not have your father know it, because you fear the punishment he might bestow upon you. Thus, it is an abject spirit that guides you, even in the work of repentance ! Nor is it for his peace of mind that you would conceal it from him ; for you are not afraid your mother should know it, because she would not punish you. It is not therefore your wish to regard *her* peace of mind.

Geo. Then tell it to my preceptor.

Coun. I am sensible how much the knowledge of your fault would afflict your parents ; and from that consideration only, and not on your own account, consent to spare you : On this condition, however, that you return hither with your preceptor, and, in his presence, give me your solemn promise of amendment. I shall request him to keep watch upon your conduct. If you break your word, I will not only mention this adventure of the counters to your father, but every one else may know it.

Geo. I consent, my lady.

Coun. You may perhaps think, that, after this, I shall forbid your visiting Julia and Augustus ; but I have at heart your reformation, and will judge of your future conduct myself. You may therefore continue coming here.

Geo. But how shall I dare to face your servants ?

Coun. You have nothing to fear on that account, for I have had more care and forethought for your reputation than yourself, by desiring Robert not to mention it in the kitchen or elsewhere.

Geo. Ah, my lady, how much am I indebted to you for your lenity ; I shall never forget the service you have done me. But your children ? and the little company with them ?

Coun. I am well acquainted with their goodness, and am sure they will forgive you. Call them.

[George with a downcast look goes slowly toward the door and bids them enter.]

Enter Augustus, Julia, Eliza, Gabriel, Lucius, Sophia.

Eli. Go, sir, you are a disgrace to our family ; I will never call you brother again.

Coun. No, my dear Eliza, he is not so guilty as you think him. He has told me every thing. It was to play a little with the counters out of doors that he first took them ; but, when it was considered as a theft, he was terrified at the idea of incurring my suspicion. This apparent guilt has sprung from a mistaken shame, which I am willing to excuse ; but [*to the little Davenports*] his scan-

dalous endeavor to make you, my little dears, seem guilty, is inexcusable.

Gab. O, my lady, we do not wish him any harm at present for it ; we know that we should forgive even such as wrong us, and particularly when we see they are unhappy.

Coun. Do you mark that, sir ? Such conduct ought to convince you how much nobler it is to possess elevated thoughts than to boast of pedigree or what you consider an elevated birth. You find you are entirely at the mercy even of those whom you have insulted ; and, with all the boast of your nobility, you are an object of their pity.

Geo. O, what shame ! but I submit to undergo it.

Gab. We will never again mention this matter. It shall be a secret between us for the time to come, or be forgotten ; shall it not, brother ?

Luc. Yes, he may rely on my silence.

Gab. And you, sister ?

So. I will not have him flogged. I know what pain it gives one. [*George, in a transport of gratitude, embraces them.*]

Geo. I desire, but dare not ask, to be acquainted with you for the future.

Gab. It will be doing us an honor, if you will still continue upon terms of friendship with us.

Aug. and Jul. And, for our part, we shall be no less delighted with your company, as long as you regard our friends.

Eli. You are all too good. George does not

merit such indulgence, and father must be informed of every thing.

Coun. You will lose my friendship and esteem entirely, could you possibly remain unaffected by your brother's laudable repentance, when even strangers forgive his errors. Do not employ the advantage that his offence affords you, to undo him in his parents' good opinion ; but, for the future, let your good counsel show him how to act, that he may merit their affection. I dare answer, you need not hereafter be ashamed of any action of your brother.

Geo. I should be unworthy of such kindness and goodness, if this lesson could be blotted from my remembrance.

Soph. Take care it be not, or *Beware of the Conjuring Bird.*



THE LITTLE FIDDLER.

A DRAMA, IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS

MR. MELFORT.

CHARLES, his Son.

SOPHIA, his Daughter.

GODFREY, his Nephew.

AMELIA RICHMOND,

CHARLOTTE RICHMOND, *Friends*
of Sophia.

JONAS, *the little Fiddler.*

SCENE, *Mr. Melfort's House in the Country.*

SCENE I.

Charles and Godfrey. Charles speaks.



ARK ye, cousin. You must do me a favor.

Godf. Well, let's know what it is? You have always something or other to ask of me.

Cha. That's because you are the cleverer of the two. You know the translation of that fable of Phædrus, that our tutor has given me for a task.

Godf. What, have you not finished it yet?

Cha. How do you think I should have finished it, when I have not begun it?

Godf. You had not time then to do it from twelve o'clock till four?

Cha. You shall hear now whether that was possible. At eleven o'clock I could not help taking a turn or two in the garden to get an appetite for dinner. We were at table an hour. Then to sit down and study immediately after one's meals, you know how dangerous the doctor says that is. Of course, as I had made a hearty dinner, I had occasion for a good deal of exercise to digest it, you know.

Godf. Well, you have now had exercise enough; and, in order to finish your task before dark, there is plenty of time.

Cha. You do not consider that now I must go to my writing.

Godf. But, as your writing-master hasn't come—

Cha. I shall wait for him. It would be spoiling every thing, to confound my hours of business.

Godf. Well, after your writing, you have still some of the afternoon, and the whole of the evening.

Cha. I shall not have a minute. My sister expects the two Misses Richmond to see her.

Godf. It is not on your account they come.

Cha. No. But then I *must* help my sister to entertain them.

Godf. What will hinder you when the young ladies go away?—

-Cha. O yes, indeed! to work by candle-light, and spoil my eyes! Yet my translation must be ready by to-morrow morning.

Godf. Whether it be, or not, what is that to me?

Cha. And would you then see me reprimanded by my tutor and my father?

Godf. You always know how to get the better of me. Come, let me see, where is this task ?

Cha. Above stairs in my room, on the table. I will go for it ; or rather come along with me.

Godf. Do you go first. I shall follow immediately. I see your sister coming this way. She wanted to speak with me.

Cha. But don't tell her any thing of this ; you understand me ?

Enter Sophia.

Soph. Well, cousin, what have you and my brother been conversing about ? He has been playing you one of his old tricks.

Godf. No ; he has only been making me one of his old requests. He wants me, as usual, to perform his task for him against to-morrow.

Soph. Is father never to be told of his idleness ?

Godf. I shall not undertake that office. You know that, ever since your mother's death, my uncle's health has been precarious, and the least emotion occasions illness for days together. You know his generosity supports me ; and he might think I wished to lessen your brother in his esteem.

Soph. Well, I shall talk to my brother the first opportunity. But do you know what I had to say to you ? The Misses Richmond are coming to see me to-day, and you must assist in our amusements.

Godf. O, I shall certainly do my best, cousin.

Soph. Ah, here they are !

Enter Amelia and Charlotte Richmond.

Soph. How do you do, my dear friends ?

[They salute each other, and curtsy to Godfrey, who bows to them.]

Char. It seems an age since I saw you last.

Amel. Indeed it is a long time.

Soph. I believe it is more than three weeks.

[Godfrey draws out the table, and gives them chairs.]

Char. Don't trouble yourself, master Godfrey.

Godf. I only do my duty, Miss.

Soph. Godfrey does it with pleasure. [*gives him her hand.*] I wish my brother had a little of his complaisance.

Enter Charles.

Cha. [*without taking notice of the company.*] This is very pretty of you, Godfrey, to let me wait so long, while you are playing the fine gentleman.

Godf. I thought myself the *last* person in the company to whom you would direct your compliments.

Cha. O do not be angry, ladies ; I shall be at your service presently.

Amel. Pray don't hurry yourself, Mr. Charles.

[Charles takes Godfrey aside, and, while the ladies converse together, draws a paper from his pocket.]

Cha. There it is ; you understand me.

Godf. Six lines ! a mighty task indeed ! are you not ashamed ?

Cha. Hist ! hold your tongue.

Godf. Ladies, with your leave, I will step out for a few minutes.

Char. We shall impatiently expect your return.

Soph. As you are going out, cousin, pray bid Jenny bring in tea. [*Exit Godf.*]

Cha. [*throwing himself into an arm-chair.*] Soh!
I shall take possession of this.

So. I think it would have been civil to ask leave.

Cha. Your leave, perhaps?

Soph. I am not the only person here.

Char. Your brother counts us as nothing, I see.

Amel. He thinks certainly that he does us a great deal of honor in keeping us company.

Cha. I know you could do without my company ; but I could not so easily deprive myself of yours.

Soph. That has at least the *appearance* of a compliment ; although, I believe, to say the truth, the tea should come in for the greatest part of it.

Cha. You are very right, my dear sister, in thinking I do not stay on your account.

Soph. As to that, I have too humble an opinion of my own merit. All, in which I *should* take pride, is, my being sister to so polite a young gentleman.

[Jenny brings the tea and sets it before Sophia.]

Cha. Let me pour it out ; pray do.

Soph. No, that is my business ; you are a little too awkward. If you want to do something, hand these cups to the ladies.

Amel. Not so much sugar for me.

Soph. Help yourself, my dear, to your liking.

[Hands her a cup and the sugar basin. Charles takes a cup for himself, and seizes the sugar-dish.]

Charles, you have three great lumps already.

Cha. That is not too much. I like it pretty sweet,

[Takes several bits, one after another, till his sister takes the basin out of his hand.]

Soph. Are you not ashamed, brother ? You see there will be none left for us.

Cha. Well, don't you know the way to the sugar-canister ?

Soph. My brother would think he had done wrong, if he saved his sister any trouble.

Cha. No ; but, if you went for it, I should have the pleasure of being alone with these ladies.

Amel. Do you hear that, Sophia ? Now will you say that your brother is not perfectly polite ?

Soph. [*having collected the cups, and filled them again.*] Charles, hand Amelia this cup.

[Charles takes the cup, and, in handing it to Amelia, spills the tea upon her dress. They hastily rise.]

Soph. There's a specimen of his politeness.— [*Aside to Charles.*] I dare say, that was done on purpose, you ill-natured creature.

Amel. O dear ! what will mother say, and what shall we do ?

Char. This is only the second time she has worn this dress. Make haste, a glass of clean water.

Soph. No ; I have heard it is better to rub it with a dry linen cloth. Here is a handkerchief quite clean.

[The ladies assist Amelia, Charlotte holding her dress, whilst Sophia rubs it. Meantime Charles remains at table, quite unconcerned, sipping his tea.]

Char. It begins to disappear ; you must let it dry.

Amel. By good luck it is a fold, where one will not think of looking.

Cha. [*aside.*] That's not my fault.

Soph. There, look now, Charlotte, I don't think it will be observed.

Char. If I had not seen the spot before——

Amel. Very true. However, Mr. Charles, another time I shall beg you to spare yourself the trouble of waiting upon me.

Soph. Come, ladies, let us take our places again. [*Going to pour out the tea, she finds the teapot empty.*] Well, this is a piece of ill manners that I could not have imagined. Would you believe it, ladies? while we were so much concerned, he has helped himself, and drank all the tea. However, I will soon order more.

Char. No, there has been quite enough; I do not wish for another drop.

Amel. The misfortune to my dress has quenched my thirst.

Cha. I beg you will make no ceremony. They can soon bring us more.

Amel. I think you should have known beforehand that your brother was to be one of the company.

Soph. Those who are not invited should at least wait their turn.

Char. Let us say no more about it. It gives me not the least concern.

Soph. Well, what shall we do now? Ah, here is our friend Godfrey. He will help us to fix on some amusement.

Cha. [*mimicking her.*] Our friend Godfrey! But, ladies, I must speak to him before you.

Enter Godfrey.

Cha. [*aside.*] Well, have you done it ?

Godf. There it is, take it, and blush for your idleness.—Well, ladies, have you fixed upon any amusement ?

Amel. No ; we waited your determination.

Godf. I have a little musician below stairs at your service. If you give me leave, I will call him up to sing you a song, or to play, if you choose, for a dance.

Soph. A little musician ! where is he ?

Char. We must acknowledge that master Godfrey knows how to amuse company.

Godf. At the same time that we amuse ourselves, we shall do an act of charity ; for the poor little fellow has no livelihood but his violin.

Cha. And who will pay him ?—master Godfrey ? He talks and acts as if the king were his cousin ; yet he has not a farthing all the while.

Soph. Are you not ashamed, brother ?

Godf. Let him go on, cousin, he does not offend me. It is no crime to be poor. I am like this little musician ; who is, for all that, a very good boy. I will give him this sixpence I have remaining ; and he has promised to play for this the whole evening.

Char. We will make a collection to pay him.

Amel. Yes ; we shall club.

Godf. Shall I go for him ? he waits at the door.

Soph. By all means cousin, and make haste.

[*Godfrey goes out, in the meantime Jenny brings in cake on a plate.*]

Cha. [*going to take the plate from Jenny, Sophia prevents him.*] I was only going to cut it up.

Soph. I will save you the trouble ; you would cut it up so well, I suppose, that we should have no more of the cake than we had of the tea. [*She divides it, and hands it round.*]

Cha. [*after taking his share.*] Who is to have the piece that is left ?

Soph. What ! is my cousin to have none ?

Amel. I would rather give him my part.

Char. And I mine.

Cha. [*with a sneer.*] He is exceedingly happy.

Soph. Do you envy him for his cake only ?

Enter Godfrey, leading Jonas by the hand, who has his violin under his arm.

Godf. Give me leave to present my young performer.

Char. and Amel. He is a smart little fellow.

Soph. Where do you come from, my man ?

Jon. I come from the wolds of Yorkshire, ma'am.

Amel. What has made you come so far ?

Jonas. Because my poor father is blind and cannot work. So I lead him through the country, and support him with my fiddle.

Soph. Will you give us a specimen of your skill ?

Jonas. That I will, with all my heart ; but my performance is not very good.

Godf. Play your best ; at any rate it will be well enough for me, and these ladies will be so good as to pardon you, if you should play a little out of tune.

[Jonas tunes his violin. Amelia in the mean time taking the plate, presents the remainder of the cake to Godfrey. He bows, and holds the plate in his hand without touching the cake, while he listens to Jonas. The latter begins by playing the air of the following song ; and then accompanies it with the words :]

I.

Pity the hardships of a boy,
Whose tender hands maintain a helpless sire ;
Alas ! no other means can he employ,
But that compassion which their wants inspire.

II.

Pity their lot who would not importune,
Chill penury implores a scanty boon ;
Long years of toil have dimm'd the father's eyes,
The other's weakness that resource denies.

III.

O let their hardships touch the bounteous breast,
Relieve the aged sire and helpless boy ;
A little bread were wealth to the distrest,
Alas ! 'tis all their pressing wants enjoy.

Godf. [*giving him his hand.*] Poor child ! then you are both in great distress !

Jonas. Alas ! we are ; but, with the help of my fiddle, I hope we shall never be destitute. If we should be sick, God will take care of us ; and if we die, we shall want nothing but a little spot of earth, which may be had any where.

Godf. But, my poor little boy, perhaps you are hungry. Here, take my cake.

Jonas. O no, my pretty master, eat it yourself ; a bit of bread serves me.

Godf. No, you shall have this ; I can eat bread as well as you.

Jonas. Well, sir, I thank you ; but I will not eat :

it now. I will share it with my father ; he is not used to such good things.

Soph. Your father, say you ? here ; give *him* my part.

Char. And take mine too.

Amel. And mine.

Jonas. O no ; keep your cakes, young ladies. One piece is enough for me. We are not used to eating sweet things.

Cha. [*ironically.*] He is right ; that would spoil his fine sweet voice.

Soph. Nobody has asked you for yours.

Cha. O, I have despatched mine long ago.

Godf. Come, my man ; will you taste your cake ?

Jonas. No master ; since you are so good as to give it me, allow me to wrap it up and take it home.

Soph. Stop, I will give you a cloth ; and meantime you may lay your cake in the window.

Jonas. I will, my good young lady. I came here to play upon the fiddle, not to eat.

Amel. I wish to dance a minuet with master Godfrey. Can you play one ?

Jonas. Whatever you please. A minuet, a cotillion, or a contra dance.

Amel. Let us have the minuet first. [*Godfrey takes Amelia by the hand to dance.*]

Char. [*stepping towards Charles.*] Why cannot we also dance, Mr. Charles ?

Cha. Excuse me, miss, I can't dance.

Soph. Yet he has been full two years in learning.

Cha. I am not in a capering humor to-day.

Char. [*curtseying to him.*] So then, I'm refused.

Soph. Lend me your hat, Godfrey. I will have the honor, ma'am, [*to Charlotte*] to be your squire.

Amel. Then we'll dance a double minuet?—

Godf. Miss, I am at your service.

[*They dance a double minuet, after which Charlotte goes to take out Godfrey.*]

Char. Mr. Godfrey, now I will dance with you.

Godf. I shall be happy, miss, to have that honor.

Amel. And now, Sophia, I will be your squire.

Soph. As this goes, I find I must lose my cousin ; however, these ladies have the first claim to your complaisance.

[*They dance another minuet ; during which Charles goes to the window, takes Jonas's cake, and goes out.*]

Soph. [*to Godfrey, who wipes his face.*] Ah ! you give it up : you must acknowledge that we have stronger feet than you gentlemen.

Godf. It is because you are much nimbler.

Amel. [*to Godf.*] If your cousin had been as polite as you, we should soon have overmatched you ; for then one of us could take breath, while the other two danced. [*They look round for Charles.*]

Char. He is gone ; so much the better.

Jonas. Shall I play another tune or two ?

Godf. No ; that is enough ; unless, ladies, you would choose more. The little fellow will be glad to go and earn something elsewhere. I have already told you how little I have in my purse ; and Charles has gone off without paying.

Char. We will contribute as well as you.

Amel. Certainly, we so intended. [*Takes out her purse.*] There, master Godfrey, is my purse.

Char. And here is mine.

Soph. Hold, cousin, here is a shilling : keep your money, and this will do for us both.

Godf. No, Sophia, I have a right to pay first.

[*They collect the money, and give it to Jonas.*]

Jonas. I will never take all that ; this young gentleman promised me only sixpence.

Godf. Take the whole, my man ; we are very happy to be able to do you service.

Jonas. God reward you. Now, miss, if you will please to give me a piece of old linen or paper to wrap round the cake ?

Soph. I had quite forgot it. [*Runs to the drawer and gets a clean handkerchief.*] There ; it is a little worn, but it will do very well for this purpose.

Jon. May heaven repay you for your generosity. [*Goes to the window for the cake.*] It is not here.

Soph. What a sad boy is that Charles ! he certainly has taken this poor child's cake.

Jon. Do not be concerned, my sweet young lady. I am only sorry on account of my poor father.

Godf. If Charles were not your brother, his greediness should cost him dear ; but Jonas' father must not be a loser. My dear Sophia, lend me that sixpence you were going to pay for me just now.

Soph. No, cousin, I will have the merit of it myself. There, my lad, is sixpence ; buy another cake for your father.

[*Charlotte and Amelia feel in their purses.*]

Char. Hold, here are some more pence.

Amel. Take this too.

Jonas. O dear ! no ; this is too much.

Godf. [*taking him by the hand affectionately.*] How unhappy I am not to have any thing more to give you ! But I am an orphan, and subsist, like yourself, upon the generosity of others.

Jonas. [*to Godf.*] I wish that you had not brought me here, or that you would take back your money.

Godf. Do not be uneasy as to me. Farewell. Go and try to earn something elsewhere.

Jonas. [*to Sophia, as he is going.*] But take your handkerchief, my good young lady.

Soph. No, keep it, if it be of any use to you.

Jonas. May heaven preserve you all, and make you still more amiable than you are. [*Exit.*]

Soph. Can you imagine any thing more shameful than the behavior of Charles ?

Amel. He should not play these pranks if I were his sister.

Char. I am sorry he has destroyed all the pleasure we had in doing service to this poor little boy.

Amel. However, he is not badly off ; the cake has been pretty well made up to him.

Godf. Very true, thanks to your kindness. But that does not justify the behavior of Charles. Poor Jonas might have had one without losing the other.

Soph. It is you, cousin, who have suffered most. You have deprived yourself of your share, that my good-for-nothing brother might eat it.

[A knocking is heard at the door.]

Enter Jonas.

Godf. Here is our little fiddler again. What is the matter, my man ?

Jonas. [*crying.*] O dear ! O dear ! I am ruined.
[The children gather round.]

Soph. What has happened to you ?

Jonas. The whole of my poor subsistence—all that I had to maintain myself and my father—see, see here—my little violin—it is broken all to pieces, and your handkerchief and your money—all is gone—he has taken it all from me.

Godf. Who has broken your violin ? Who has taken your money ?

Jonas. 'Twas he—'Twas he who took my cake.

Soph. What, my brother ?

Godf. Charles ?

Char. It cannot be !

Amel. O the wretch !

Jonas. Yes, it was he. As I was going out at the street door, he met me, and asked if I had been paid for my playing, as otherwise he meant to pay me. 'O yes, that I have,' said I, 'and overpaid.' 'How came they by so much money ?' says he. 'Let me see what they have given you.' So I, silly fool that I was—I should have remembered the cake ; but I thought no more of that, I was so overjoyed to carry home so much money to my father. Besides, as I had not counted it, I was desirous to know the amount. So I laid my fiddle down on the ground, and took out the handker-



chief. 'See here,' said I to him, 'what I have got more than was at first promised me ; one of the young misses gave it to me.' I had tied up all my money in the handkerchief, and was going to undo the knot, when he snatched at it. I now guessed his roguery. He pulled it one way and I another, when all at once, seeing my fiddle on the ground, he jumped upon it with both his feet. To save my fiddle, I loosed my hold of the handkerchief ; so he got it from me and ran away. Both my fiddle and the bow are broken, and now I have nei-

ther handkerchief nor money. O my father ! my poor father ! What will become of us ?

Soph. Why really I don't know. I have nothing more in the world. O, cousin !

Char. Here are a few pence, all that I have.

Jonas. My sweet miss, I thank you ; but that will not buy me a fiddle. O my poor father ! he had it more than fifteen years.

Amel. Take this. It is the last farthing I have.

Soph. [*runs to her drawer.*] Here is my thimble ; it is gold. Sell it, my poor little man. I have a brass one left.

Godf. No ; keep your thimble, cousin. Stop, my boy, I can help you. [*Takes out his buckles, and gives them to him.*] I have another pair of pinch-beck. You will certainly get three dollars for these. I can give them away, for they are my own. My godfather made me a present of them for my birth-day. [*Sophia offers him her thimble, and Godfrey his buckles. Jonas hesitates.*]

Jonas. No ; I will not have them. My father would think I had stolen them.

Soph. Take my thimble, at least.

Godf. Won't you take my buckles ? You will make me angry. Take them, I say.

Jonas. O dear ! would you have me deprive you of your ornaments ?

Godf. Do not be uneasy. God will repay me, perhaps, more than I give you. Your father wants bread ; I have no father to maintain.

Soph. Go, and take care of yourself.

Jonas. At least take back your thimble.

Soph. No ; it is not mine now.

Char. If you ever pass our way, I will do something for you.

Amel. It is in Green Square ; any one will show you Mr. Richmond's.

Jonas. Great folks seldom ask me into their houses. I am sometimes taken down into the kitchen.

So. Well, enough of this. Your father may be uneasy on your account, and ours may soon return.

Jon. Your father, miss ? do you expect him soon ?

Soph. Yes, go your ways, else he who took your handkerchief and money may take this from you too.

Jonas. But I hope you are sure not to be scolded.

Godf. No, never fear. Good by.

Jonas. The good-natured little souls. [*Exit.*

Char. I am very sorry you have deprived yourself of your buckles, master Godfrey.

Amel. You have set us a good example.

Godf. I only followed that of Sophia. I should be happy in the opportunity to do a good action, even if it had not been furnished by the mean behavior of Charles. I shall now look with pleasure at my pinchbeck buckles !

Enter Mr. Melfort, followed by Jonas.

The children get close together. Sophia and Godfrey cast a side look at Jonas, and whisper together.

Mr. M. [*to the Misses Richmond.*] Your servant, ladies ! I thank you for the honor you have done my daughter. But give me leave to hear, in your presence, what this boy has to say. He was wait-

ing for me upon the stairs, and cannot leave, he says, until he has spoken to me in your hearing. Come, boy, what have you to say ?

Jonas. [*to Sophia and Godfrey.*] My good miss and master, I beg you not to be angry with me ; but I cannot help speaking, as it would be wrong in me to keep what you have compelled me to take, without the consent of your father. I know that children have nothing of their own to give away.

Mr. M. I don't understand you ?

Jonas. I am going to explain, sir. This young master called me from the window to come in and play upon my violin for these ladies. There was another little gentleman along with them, a very handsome, but a very ill-natured rogue.

Mr. M. What ! my son ?

Jonas. I beg pardon. That word escaped me. I played my best, such tunes as I knew, and this good company were so kind as to give me a piece of cake, a clean handkerchief to wrap it in, and almost a handful of money ; I don't know how much.

Mr. M. Well, what followed ?

Jon. The ill-natured little gentleman took away the cake, which I intended to carry to my poor father, who is blind. I should not have cared for this ; but he slipped out of the room, and, when I was going away quite overjoyed with my little bundle, he watched for me in the passage, took the handkerchief and money from me by force, and broke my violin in pieces. Look, here it is, [*crying*].—All my riches, that supported me and my father.

Mr. M. Did Charles commit such a malicious, ill-natured action? What! my son?—

Char. His behavior in every thing else makes this very probable. Ask Sophia herself.

Mr. M. Do not let it afflict you, my man; I will indemnify you. Is this all?

Jonas. No, sir. In my trouble I returned to tell these good little gentlefolks the whole affair. They had not money enough to pay for the damage; so this pretty miss gave me her gold thimble, and this young gentleman his silver buckles. I could not possibly keep them: my father would have thought I had stolen them. I knew you were coming home, so I waited to return them, and here they are. But I have no fiddle now! O my poor father!

Mr. M. What an account you have given me! Is it you, or you, my generous children, whom I should most admire? Excellent boy! in indigence, to lose all; and yet, through fear of doing wrong, to risk letting a father, whom you gratefully love, perish with hunger!

Jonas. Is it a great matter not to be a rogue? No; one never thrives on ill-gotten bread. That's what my father and mother have often told me. If you would only please to buy me another fiddle, it would make amends. Whatever more the thimble and buckle would have brought, God will repay me.

Mr. M. Your father and you must be endowed with extraordinary uprightness of heart not even to suspect the depravity of others! God will make use of me as an instrument to impart his blessings

to you. You may stay here, and wait upon Godfrey, till we see what we can do better for you.

Jonas. What ! wait upon this little angel of a gentleman ! O, I should be delighted [*bows to Godfrey.*] But, no, [*sorrowfully*] I cannot leave my father. Without me, how would he do to live ? What ! I live amid abundance, and he in poverty ? O no.

Mr. M. Excellent child ! who is your father ?

Jonas. An old blind laborer, whom I supported by playing on the fiddle. It is true, neither he nor I seldom eat any thing but bread and milk. But God gives us enough for the day, and we take no care for the morrow ; He provides for that also.

Mr. M. Well, I will take care of your father, and, if he wishes, get him into the asylum for the blind, where he will be supported. You can go and see him when you please. [*Jonas, after an exclamation of joy, runs about the room quite transported.*]

Jonas. What, my dear father ! That will make him die with joy. I cannot stop any longer, but must go and bring him here. [*Runs out. Sophia and Godfrey take Mr. Melfort's hands.*]

Mr. M. My dear children ! how happy would this day be to me, if, while I admire the generosity of your sentiments, the idea of my son's unworthiness did not intervene to poison my happiness ! But no, it shall not trouble me. God has given me another son in you, my dear Godfrey. If you are not so by birth, you are by the ties of blood, and by congenial worthiness of heart. Yes, you shall be my

son. But where is Charles? Seek him, and bring him hither to me. [*Godfrey goes out.*]

Soph. It is almost an hour since he was here. While the little boy was playing a minuet to us, he disappeared with his piece of cake.

Godf. [*returning.*] He was seen going into the confectioner's shop. John has gone for him.

Mr. M. Now, children, step into my study. I wish to know what answer he will have the assurance to make. When I want you, I will call you.

Char. and Amel. Then we shall take our leave.

Mr. M. No, my dears! I will send word to your father and mother, that you will spend the rest of the evening with us. Probably the generous little Jonas and his old father will also be our guests. I need something to assuage the cruel wound that Charles has given my heart, and I know of nothing more salutary than the conversation of such amiable children as you.

Soph. [*listening.*] I think I hear Charles coming.

[*Mr. M. opens his study-door. The children withdraw.*]

SCENE II. *Mr. Melfort alone.*

I have long dreaded a discovery of this disagreeable nature, but could not have suspected him of any thing so horrid. It is perhaps not yet too late to correct his vices. Alas! why am I obliged to try a desperate remedy?

Enter Charles.

Cha. What are your commands, father?

Mr.M. Where have you been ? Were you not in your room ?

Cha. Our tutor has gone out. Godfrey was below stairs. Therefore, after studying all the afternoon, I grew tired of being alone.

Mr.M. Why did you not, like Godfrey, join the little company that I found with your sister ?

Cha. So I did ; but those misses treated me ill——

Mr. M. How ? You astonish me.

Cha. First, they drank tea, without asking me to have a drop. On the contrary, they showed me all the spite in the world. Then Godfrey picked up a little beggar brat in the street, and brought him to play the fiddle to them. He gave him some of the cake that was brought up, and me not a bit. They danced, but not one of the ladies would dance with me, although there were three of them, and no gentleman except Godfrey. What could I do here ? I went down to the door to look at the passers-by.

Mr.M. Only to the door ? What was it then that passed at the corner of the street, between a little fiddler and you ? I have been told, that you beat him, broke his violin, and that he went away crying.

Cha. Yes, that is true, father ; and if I had not been very good-natured, I should have got a constable to put him in bridewell. You shall hear, sir. When I saw him go out, I said to myself, I must give this poor creature something too for his trouble, for I knew that Godfrey had nothing of his own, and a beggar is ill paid with a morsel of cake. So

I took some money out of my purse, which I gave him, and he drew out a handkerchief to put it in. I perceived that it was one of my sister's handkerchiefs; you may see the mark. I begged him, very civilly, to return it, which he would not. So I took him by the collar, and we struggled together, and by accident I put my foot upon his fiddle.

Mr. M. [*with indignation.*] Silence, base liar! I can hear you no longer.

Cha. [*going to take his father's hand.*] My dear father, what makes you angry?

Mr. M. Begone, wicked boy, out of my sight! you shock me. [*He calls the children from the study.*]

Enter Sophia, Amelia, Charlotte, and Godfrey.

Mr. M. Come hither, my children; I will see none but those who merit my affection. As for you, quit my presence. But stop. You shall receive your sentence first. [*To Soph. and Godf.*] You have heard his charges against you.

Soph. Yes, father; and, were it not necessary for own justification, I would not say a word against him, for fear of increasing your anger.

Cha. Do not believe any thing she will tell you.

Mr. M. Be silent. I have already had proof of your detestable falsehoods. Lying is the high road to theft and murder. You have already committed the first, and perhaps want only strength and opportunity to attempt the other. Go on, Sophia.

Soph. In the first place, he has done no task this afternoon. Godfrey wrote his translation for him.

Mr. M. Is this true?

Godf. I cannot deny it.

Soph. Next he spilt a dish of tea upon Amelia's dress ; and, while we were busy in wiping it, he remained at table, and emptied the tea-pot. There was none left for us. These young ladies are witnesses to what I assert. As to the cake——

Mr. M. That is enough. All your baseness is discovered. Go to your chamber for this day ; to-morrow morning I will put you out of the house. I will give you time enough to amend before you return ; and, if that experiment does not succeed, other methods are not wanting to dispose of incorrigible reprobates, who disturb society by their misdeeds. Godfrey, tell John to see that he keeps in his room. Give orders, in the mean time, that your tutor be sent to me as soon as he returns.

Soph. and Godf. [*interceding for him.*] Dear father !—Dear uncle !

Mr. M. I cannot hear a word in his favor. He who is capable of taking from the poor, by force, the earnings of his industry ; of breaking the instrument of a poor family, by which they gained their livelihood ; and of seeking to justify such actions by falsehood and calumny, should be turned out of the society of men. I thank God that he has still left me two such excellent children as you. You shall be my consolation henceforward ; and with you I will endeavor to make myself as happy this evening as the father of so unprincipled a son can be.

VANITY PUNISHED.

A DRAMA, IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS.

MR. WALLER.

MRS. WALLER.

VALENTINE, *their Son.*

MICHAEL, *a Country Boy.*

MR. RAY,

MR. NASH, *Friends to Mr.*
Waller.

MARTIN, *a Gardener.*

SCENE I.

A Garden. Mr. and Mrs. Waller.

Mr. Waller.

 SEE Valentine yonder walking in the garden, with a book in his hand. I am afraid it is rather through vanity, than from any real desire of improving himself, that he always appears to be busy in his reading.

Mrs. W. What makes you think so, my dear?

Mr. W. Don't you remark that he casts a side-look now and then, to see if any one takes notice of him?

Mrs. W. And yet his masters give a very flattering account of his diligence, and they all agree that he is very forward for his age.

Mr. W. That's true. But, if my suspicions are

correct, and if the little he can know has made him conceited, I would rather that he knew nothing, and were modest.

Mrs. W. That he knew nothing ?

Mr. W. Yes, my dear. A man without very great extent of knowledge, but upright, modest, and industrious, is a more estimable member of society, than a learned man, whose studies have turned his head, and puffed up his heart.

Mrs. W. I cannot think my son of that description.

Mr. W. Heaven forbid. But, whilst we are here in the country, I shall have more opportunities of observing him ; and I am resolved to take advantage of the first chance that shall offer, to clear my doubts. I see him coming towards us. Leave me alone with him a moment. [*Ex. Mrs. W.*

Enter Valentine.

Val. [*to Michael, whom he pushes back.*] No ; go away. Father, 'tis that little fool of a country boy, who always comes to interrupt me in my reading.

Mr. W. Why do you call that good-natured child a little fool ?

Val. Why, father, he knows nothing——

Mr. W. Of what *you* have learnt, I grant ; but then he knows many things that you do not ; and you may both inform each other a good deal, if you would communicate what you know to each other.

Val. He may learn a good deal of me, but what can I learn from him ?

Mr. W. If ever you should have a farm, do you think that it would be of no service to you to have

an early notion of the labors of the country ; to learn to distinguish trees and plants ; to know the times of sowing and harvest, and to study the wonders of vegetation ? Michael possesses these different parts of knowledge, and desires to share them with you. They will perhaps be hereafter of great use to you. Those, on the contrary, which you could communicate, would be of no service to him. So that you see, in this intercourse, all the advantage is on your side.

Val. Well, but father, would it become me to learn any thing from a little country boy ?

Mr. W. Why not, if he is capable of instructing you ? I know of no real distinction among men, except that of useful talents and good manners ; and you must own that, in both these points, he has equally the advantage over you.

Val. What, in good manners too ?

Mr. W. In every station, good manners consists in treating all persons as our duty prescribes. He does so, by showing a particular attachment and complaisance to you. Do you do the same to him ? Do you make a return of mildness and good will ? And yet he appears to merit them. He is active and intelligent. I believe him to be possessed of good-nature, spirit, and good sense. You ought to think yourself very happy in having so amiable a companion, with whom you may at once amuse and improve yourself. His father is my foster-brother, and has always had a remarkable affection for me. I am pretty sure that Michael has the same

for you. See how the poor little fellow lingers about the terrace-walk, to meet you. Take care to use him with civility. There is more honor and integrity in his father's cottage, than in many palaces. His family have been our tenants for some generations, and I should be glad to see the connexion continued between our children. [*He goes out.*]

Val. [*alone.*] Yes, a fine connexion indeed ! I think father is joking. This little country boy teach me any thing ! No, I will surprise him now so much with my learning, that he will not think of talking to me of his own, I'll warrant him.

Enter Michael.

Mich. You won't have my little nosegay then, master Valentine ?

Val. Nosegay ? Pshaw ! it contains neither ranunculus nor tulip !

Mich. Why, it is true, they are only field flowers, but they are pretty ; and I thought you might like to know them by their names.

Val. A great matter, indeed, to know the names of your herbs ! You may carry them where you found them.

Mich. Well now, if I had known that, I would not have taken the trouble to gather them. I was resolved not to go home yesterday evening, without bringing you something ; and, as I came back from work, though it was rather late, and I had a great appetite for my supper, I stopped in our fields to gather them by moonlight.

Val. You talk of the moon ! do you know how big it is ?

Mich. Heh ! fegs ! as big as a cheese.

Val. Ignorant little clown !

[Struts with an air of importance, while Michael stands staring at him.]

Look here. [*showing his book.*] This is Telemaque. Have you ever read it ?

Mich. That is not in the Spelling-book : our schoolmaster never taught me about Tellymack.

Val. No, it is none of your country books.

Mich. Nay, how should I have read it then ? But let us see it.

Val. Don't think of touching it with your dirty hands ! [*holding one of them up.*] Where did you buy these tanned leather gloves ?

Mich. Gloves ! it is my hand, master Valentine.

Val. The skin is so hard, one may cut it into shoe-soles.

Mich. It is not with idleness that they are grown so hard. You know how to talk very well, I dare say, and yet I would not change conditions with you. To work honestly, and offend nobody, is all that I know, and it would be no harm if you knew as much. Good by, sir. [*Exit.*]

Val. [*alone.*] I think the little clown had a mind to make game of me. But I see company coming on the terrace-walk. I must put on a studious air.

[He sits down, seeming to read in his book with great attention.]

Enter Mr. and Mrs. Waller, Mr. Ray, Mr. Nash.

Mr. W. What a fine evening ! Would you

choose, gentlemen, to take a walk up this slope, to see the setting sun ?

Mr. R. I was going to mention it. The weather is delicious, and the western sky without a cloud.

Mr. N. I shall be sorry to go far from the nightingale. Do you hear her charming melody, madam ?

Mrs. W. I was absorbed in thinking. My heart was filled with ecstasy.

Mr. R. How can any person live in the city during this charming weather ?

Mr. W. Valentine, will you walk up the hill with us to see the sun setting ?

Val. No, I thank you, father. I am reading something here that gives me more pleasure.

Mr. W. If you speak truth, I pity you ; and if you do not—Come, gentlemen, there is not a moment to lose. Let us continue our walk.

[They ascend the hill.

Val. [*seeing them at a good distance.*] There, they are almost out of sight ; I need now be under no constraint. [*Puts the book into his pocket.*]

What an opinion these gentlemen will have of my diligence ! I should like to be a bird, and fly after them, to hear the praises that they are giving me.

[Saunters about, yawning and listless, for nearly a quarter of an hour.

I am tired, after all, of being here alone. I can do better ! The sun is now set, and I hear the company returning. I will slip into the wood, and hide myself, so that they shall scarcely find me. My mother will send all the servants with torches to

look for me. They will talk of nothing but me the whole evening, and will compare me with those great philosophers that have been known to go astray in their learned meditations, and to lose themselves in woods. My adventure will make a fine noise ! Now for it. [*He goes into the wood.*]

SCENE II. *Mr. and Mrs. Waller, Mr. Ray, Mr. Nash, and Martin.*

Mr. R. I never saw weather more pleasing, nor a more charming scene.

Mr. W. My pleasure, gentlemen, has been doubled, by enjoying it in your company.

Mr. N. The nightingale too still continues her song. Her voice seems to grow more tender as night comes on. I am sorry Mrs. Waller does not seem to listen to it with as much pleasure as before.

Mrs. W. Because I am anxious about my son. I do not see him in the garden. [*She calls.*] Valentine !—He does not answer. [*Perceiving the gardener, she calls him.*] Martin, have you seen my son ?

Mar. Yes, madam ; about ten minutes ago I saw him turn towards the grove.

Mrs. W. Towards the grove ! Bless me, he may lose himself ? Pray run after him, and find him.

Mar. Yes, madam. [*He goes out.*]

Mrs. W. Mr. Waller, won't you go with him ?

Mr. W. No, my dear ; I am not uneasy for my part. Martin will be able to find where he is.

Mrs. W. But if he should take a different direction ? I am much frightened !

M. N. Make yourself easy, madam. Mr. Ray and I will take the two sides of the wood, while the gardener takes the middle. He will certainly be found.

Mrs. W. Ah, gentlemen, I did not dare to ask it of you, but you know the feelings of a mother.

Mr. W. Gentlemen, do not give yourselves so much trouble, I'd rather you would not.

Mr. R. Do not take it amiss that we comply with Mrs. Waller's request, rather than yours.

Mr. W. I must confess it is against my wishes.

Mr. N. We will receive your reproaches at our return. [*Mr. R. and Mr. N. go towards the grove.*]

SCENE III. *Mr. and Mrs. Waller.*

Mrs. W. Why, my dear husband, whence comes this indifference about your son ?

Mr. W. Do you think that I love him less than you ? No, but think I know better how to love him.

Mrs. W. And what if he could not be found ?

Mr. W. I should be very glad of it.

Mrs. W. What, that he should pass the night in a gloomy wood ? What would become of the poor child ? and what would become of me ?

Mr. W. You would both be cured. He of his vanity, and you of your injudicious fondness, that upholds him in it.

Mrs. W. What do you mean, my dear ?

Mr. W. I am now convinced of what I only suspected in the morning. The boy's head is filled with excessive vanity, and all his reading is mere ostentation. He has lost himself on purpose to make us

look for him, and to appear absent and forgetful through intense study. It gives me more pain that his mind should wander from a right way of thinking, than if his steps really went astray in the wood. He will be unhappy all his life, if he be not cured of it in time ; and there is nothing but a wholesome humiliation that can save him.

Mrs. W. But do you consider——

Mr. W. Yes, every thing. He is eleven years old. If he can profit at all by his natural sense, or learning, the light of the moon and the direction of the wind may guide him sufficiently to clear the wood.

Mrs. W. But if he has not that thought ?

Mr. W. He will better see the necessity of profiting by the lessons I have given him upon the subject. He is intended for the army, and, as a soldier must pass many nights without shelter, he will now know what it is, and not go to a camp quite raw and inexperienced to be laughed at by his companions. The air is not very cold at this season of the year ; and, for one night, he will not die of hunger. Since, by his folly, he has brought himself into trouble, let him get out of it again, or suffer a few of its disagreeable consequences.

Mrs. W. No ; I cannot agree to it ; and, if you don't send the people after him, I will go myself.

Mr. W. Well, my dear, I will quiet your fears ; although I am sorry that you will not let me follow my plan, as I intended. I will send little Michael to join him as it were by chance. Colin too shall be at a small distance, to run to them in case of any

accident. As to any thing more, do not ask it ; I have taken my resolution, and do not choose, by a blind weakness, to deprive my son of a lesson that may be of great service to him. Here are our friends coming back with Martin.

Mrs. W. O heavens ! they have not found him.

Mr. W. I am glad of it.

Enter Mr. Ray and Mr. Nash.

Mr. N. Our search has been in vain ; but, if Mr. Waller will let us have some servants and lights—

Mr. W. No, gentlemen ; you have complied with my wife's request, you will now listen to mine. I am a father, and think I know my duty as one. Let us go into the parlor, and I will give you an account of my design. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE IV. *The middle of the wood. - Enter Valentine.*

Val. What have I done ! fool that I am ! It is dark night, and I don't know which way to turn. *[calls.]* Father ! father !—Nobody answers. I am undone ; what will become of me ! *[cries.]* O mother ! where are you ? Answer your son this once.—Heavens ! what is that running through the wood ? If it should be a robber ! Help ! help ! help !

Enter Michael.

Mich. Who's there ? Who is it that cries so piteously ? What, is it you, sir ? How do you happen to be here at this time of night ?

Val. O, dear Michael, my dear friend, I have lost my way.

Mich. [*looking at him first with an air of surprise, and then bursting into a loud laugh.*] You don't say so ? I your dear Michael ? your dear friend ? You mistake ; I am only a dirty little country boy. Don't you remember ? Nay, let go my hand. The skin is only fit to cut up for shoe-soles.

Val. My dear friend, excuse my impertinence, and for pity's sake guide me home. My mother will pay you well.

Mich. [*surveying Valentine from head to foot.*] Have you finished reading your Tellymack ?

Val. [*looking down, confused.*] Ah, pray now——

Mich. [*putting his finger to the side of his nose, and looking up to the sky.*] Tell me, my little wise man, how big may the moon be just now ?

Val. Nay, spare me, I beg of you, and guide me out of this wood.

Mich. You see then, master, that one may be a dirty little country boy, and yet be good for something. What would you give to know your way, instead of knowing how big the moon is ?

Val. I own my fault, and I promise never to show any pride for the future.

Mich. Well, that's clever. But this repenting, through necessity, may hang only by a thread. It is not amiss that a young gentleman should see what it is to look upon a poor man's son like a dog, and play with him according to his fancy. To show you that an honest clown does not bear malice, I will pass the night with you, as I have passed many a one with our sheep on the hills. To-morrow morn-

ing early I will take you home to your father. Here then I'll share my bedchamber with you.

Val. O, my good Michael.

Mich. [*stretching himself under a tree.*] Come, sir, settle yourself at your ease.

Val. But where is this bedchamber of yours ?

Mich. Here. [*striking the ground.*] Here is my bed ; take your place. It is wide enough for both of us.

Val. What, must we lie here in the open air ?

Mich. I assure you, sir, the king himself has not a better couch. See what a fine ceiling we have overhead ; how many bright diamonds adorn it ; and then our handsome silver lamp. [*pointing to the moon.*] Well, what do you think of it ?

Val. My dear Michael, I am dying with hunger.

Mich. I dare say I can help you there too. See, here are some potatoes. Dress them as you please.

Val. Why they are raw.

Mich. It is only to boil or roast them. Make a fire.

Val. We want a light to kindle one ! and then where shall we find coal or wood ?

Mich. [*smiling.*] Cannot you find all that in your books ?

Val. O no, my dear Michael.

Mich. Well, I'll show you that I know more than you and all your Tellymacks.

[Takes a tinder-box, flint, and steel, from his pocket. Crack ! there's a fire already ! now you shall see.

[He gathers dry leaves, and, placing them round the tinder, fans with his hat until they take fire.

We shall soon have a warm blazing hearth. [*he*



puts pieces of dry wood upon the lighted leaves.] Do you see? [lays the potatoes close to the fire, and sprinkles them with dust.] This must serve, instead of ashes, to hinder them from burning.

[Having placed the potatoes properly, and covered them with more dust, he turns the burning coals over them, adds fresh wood, and fans the whole into a blaze.]

Have you a finer fire in your father's kitchen? Come, now they will soon be done.

Val. O, my good friend, what return can I make for your kindness?

Mich. Return? Pooh! when one does good, it pays

itself. But, stop a moment, while the potatoes are roasting, I will bring some hay for you. I saw a good deal lying in one part of the wood. You can sleep upon that like a prince. But take care of the roast while I am away. [*Goes out singing.*]

Val. Fool that I am ! how could I be so unjust as to despise that child. What am I, compared to him ? How little am I in my own eyes, when I examine his behavior and mine ! But it shall never happen again. Henceforward I will not despise others because they are less wealthy or less learned than myself. I will not be proud nor vain.

[*He walks about, and gathers dry sticks for the fire.*]

Enter Michael, dragging a large bundle of hay.

Mich. Here is a bed of down, coverlet and all. I'll now spread you a bed quite soft and fragrant.

Val. I thank you, my friend. I would help you, but I don't know how to set about it.

Mich. I don't need assistance. I can do it alone. Go warm yourself.

[*He unties the bundle, spreads part of it on the ground, and reserves the rest for a covering.*]

That's finished. This will make a nice comfortable bed. Now let us think of supper. [*takes a potato from the fire, and feels of it.*] They are done. Eat them while they are warm, they are best then.

Val. What, won't you eat some with me ?

Mich. No, thank you. There's just enough for you.

Val. How ? do you think ?——

Mich. You are too kind. I won't touch them. I am not hungry. Besides, I shall have as much

pleasure in seeing you eat them. Are they good ?

Val. Excellent, my dear Michael.

Mich. I dare say you never tasted sweeter at your father's table.

Val. That's very true.

Mich. Have you finished ? Come, then, your bed is ready for you.

[Valentine lies down. Michael spreads the rest of the hay over him, and then takes off his jacket.

The night is cold ; here, cover yourself with this too. If you find yourself chilly, come to the fire ; I'll take care that it is kept burning. Good night.

Val. Dear Michael, I shall never be easy until I make amends for treating you ill.

Mic. Think no more of it ; I do not. The lark will awake us to-morrow morning at break of day.

[Valentine falls asleep, and Michael sits close by him to keep the fire burning, and within bounds. At break of day Michael awakes him.]

Come, master Valentine, you have slept enough. The lark has already opened her song, and the sun will soon appear above the hills. Let us set out and go to your father's.

Val. [*rubbing his eyes.*] What, already ? so soon ? Good morning, my dear Michael !

Mich. Good morning, master Valentine ! How did you sleep ?

Val. [*rising.*] As sound as a rock. Here is your jacket. I thank you a thousand, thousand times. I shall never forget you as long as I live.

Mic. Do not talk of thanks. I am as happy as you are. Come, walk with me. I'll guide you. [*Exe.*]

SCENE V. *A room in Mr. Waller's house. Mr. and Mrs. Waller.*

Mrs. W. In what terrors have I passed this night ! I fear, my dear, that some accident has happened to him. We must send out people to look for him.

Mr. W. Make yourself easy, my love ; I will go myself. But who knocks thus early ? [*the door opens.*] Look, here he is.

Enter Valentine and Michael.

Mrs. W. [*running to her son.*] Ah ! do I see you again, my dear child ?

Mich. Yes, madam, there he is, ifegs ! a little better mayhap than before you lost him.

Mr. W. Is that the case ?

Val. Yes, father, I have been well punished for my pride. What will you give him that has reformed me ?

Mr. W. A good reward, accompanied with my endless gratitude.

Val. [*presenting Michael to him.*] Well, this is he to whom you owe it. I owe him my friendship too, and he shall always share it.

Mr. W. If that be so, I'll make him a little present every year of a couple of guineas, for curing you of an intolerable fault.

Mrs. W. And I will make him one of the same amount, for having preserved my son to me.

Mich. If you pay me for the satisfaction which you feel, I should pay you for that which I felt. You therefore owe me nothing.

Mr. W. No, my little man, we shall not depart from our words. But let us all four go to breakfast. Valentine shall relate his adventures of the night.

Val. Yes, father ; and I shall not spare myself, though I should be turned into ridicule for it. I blush for my folly, but hope I shall never have to blush for the same behavior again.

Mr. W. My dear son, you know not how happy you will render your mother and me, by proving by your future conduct that your reformation is sincere, and will never suffer a relapse.

[Valentine takes Michael by the hand. Mr. Waller gives his to his lady, and they all go into the next apartment.]

THE VETERAN DISMISSED WITH HONOR.

A DRAMA, IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS.

LORD CORNWALLIS.
OFFICER, *attending him.*
CAPTAIN HARLOW.
MRS. HARLOW.

BERTRAM,
CECILIA,
HELEN, *their Children.*

The SCENE is at the entrance of a grove, in front of the house of Captain Harlow, somewhat distant from the road.

SCENE I.

Bertram and Cecilia. Cecilia is discovered sitting on a fallen tree, picking strawberries. Bertram brings her others, and both hats that hold the strawberries are neatly lined with leaves.

Bertram.



LOOK, sister, we shall soon have enough.

Cec. I don't know, Bertram, how I shall dispose of mine ; my hat is too full already.

Ber. It can't be long before Helen brings the basket ; indeed she might have gone to the house, found one, and returned in much less

time than this. In the meantime, Cecilia, you can put them in your apron.

Cec. Yes, indeed ; that would make a fine business : To spot it all from top to bottom ! What do you suppose mother would say of that scheme ? No, I have thought of something else. Your hat is biggest ; so I'll add my strawberries to yours, and you shall gather more, whilst I am picking these.

Ber. Well said ; and, in the interim, Helen cannot fail to come, and then we shall have enough.

Cec. When they are all together, we shall see.

Ber. What's over when the baskets are filled, we'll take ourselves.

Cec. I think we shall not have much appetite to taste them afterwards. Ah, brother ! 'tis the last time we shall eat with our father this year, and who can tell that we shall ever see him again !

Ber. O don't be dejected, sister. In a battle it is not every one that's killed.

Cec. O frightful war ! if men were not so wicked, but would love each other, as we do——

Ber. Mighty fine indeed ! And don't we quarrel every day for trifles ? We each think we are in the right ; and frequently it would puzzle one to find out which is. 'Tis just the same among grown men.

Ce. They ought at least to be friends again as soon we are. Our quarrels never end in bloodshed.

Ber. No ; because our parents settle them ; but men, Cecilia, are not children ; and won't let themselves be governed, if they have means of self-defence. Had we ought to suffer wrong ?

Cec. You are always talking like a soldier !

Ber. A good reason why, because I am to be one. Look ye, sister ; notwithstanding any thing you say against it, war is a very charming thing. Without it, how do you imagine we could live ? for would the little property our father possesses be sufficient to support us ? But don't cry. You grieve me.

Cec. Let me weep, dear brother, while we are alone. I would much rather do so here, than in the presence of father, it would afflict him.

Ber. Come, come ; dry your eyes, and set to work for some amusement. I'll go fill your hat.

Cec. Go that way ; for we have none left hereabouts. [*Bertram goes out.*] I would I were only learned enough, that I might pray to God, for he would hear me. Or at least, if I were big enough, I would, in that case, go to court, and fall before the king ; and he, I'm sure, would grant me my father's dismissal, when I begged and prayed him to oblige me. He has served his country long enough, I think. [*She resumes picking strawberries.*]

Enter Lord Cornwallis, and an Officer.

Lord C. [*whispering the Officer.*] Yonder is the house to which we were directed, where Captain Harlow lives. But what a charming little girl is here ! I'll stop and have some conversation with her ; please not to address me by my name, but as a companion. [*To Cecilia, tapping her upon the shoulder.*] You are very hard at work, I see, my pretty child.

Cec. O, sir, you frightened me.

Lord C. I ask your pardon, my dear. I did not mean to do so. And for whom are you gathering all those strawberries? They cannot but be very good, I fancy, picked by such a plump and snowy hand.

Cec. [*holding out the hat.*] I beg then you will take some, sir. Don't be afraid; for they are very clean. I wish I had a better plate to put them in.

[*Lord C. and his attendant take some of the fruit.*]

Lord C. I never tasted better: do you sell them, my dear?

Cec. No, sir; though you were to give me — I can't tell how much.

Lord C. You are in the right; they are above all value, gathered by so sweet a little hand.

Cec. Fie! how you talk, sir! but 'tis not for that; they should be at your service, were they not intended for my dear father [*wiping her eyes.*] We have not gathered any for him yet, this season; and perhaps these will be the last he will eat.

Lord C. What, my dear, he's ill then? and you think he'll not live?

Offic. It is to be hoped, his illness is not yet desperate, since he thinks of eating strawberries.

Cec. No, not that. 'Tis true indeed he has been troubled with the rheumatism all last winter, to a very great degree; and it is not yet quite cured. But, cured or not, he must set out to-morrow.

Lord C. And why? is his departure so needful?

Cec. O, because his regiment then goes through the village; and he must join it on the march.

Lord C. His regiment ?

Cec. Yes, lord Corwallis's, that's going to America.

Lord C. [*aside to the officer.*] This must be one of Captain Harlow's children.

Cec. [*overhearing him.*] Yes, that's my father. Do you know him ?

Lord C. This gentleman and I are his comrades.

Cec. What ! is the regiment so near ? Will it go through the town to-day ?

Lord C. No ; not till to-morrow. We are come, my dear, before it ; and—and [*aside to the officer.*] What excuse can I make ?—And a wheel belonging to our carriage being broken hard by, we tried to get a little shade here while it was mending. And now, I fancy, it must be set to rights. This path, I take it, leads directly to the road again ?

Cec. No, sir ; it takes you to the village.

Lord C. And the village, I suppose, belongs to your father ?

Cec. Belongs to him ? I wish he were so rich ; no, he owns nothing but a little cottage, with a garden, this small grove, and yonder meadow. When he's not on service, he passes his time here with us.

Lord C. He was ill then in the winter ?

Cec. Yes indeed, sir, to our sorrow ; and he could not move a limb. Besides, a wound, which he received many years ago below the temple, had broken out afresh. And now that he is almost well he must go again to meet with new misfortunes.

Lord C. Why, in such a situation, does he not

sell out ? He might procure sufficient attestations from the surgeon.

Cec. Mother did that in private for him ; but her letters were not answered. Certainly the king refuses to believe her ; or perhaps *that* lord Cornwallis, who commands the regiment, is so cruel——

Lord C. Truly, I believe lord Cornwallis would not like to lose so good an officer as your father, by whose instructions myself and all the younger officers may learn so much.

Cec. And yet you don't appear so very young ; but are your father and mother both living ?

Lord C. [*a little disconcerted.*] Do you doubt it ?

Cec. O, I warrant they cried at parting with you. How could they consent to lose you ? I remember how much grief it caused mother and us, when first my eldest brother went abroad to study ; and that's nothing in comparison with war.

Lord C. I can't tell that ; I have left them, after many separations ; in which case 'tis nothing to leave one another. Besides which, my father went with me when I first went to camp.

Cec. Did he ? O, those fathers, who are soldiers themselves, are a little hard, I can tell you ; but yet that's not the case with my father. He's very indulgent ! Why, a child is scarce so gentle ! 'Tis on the point of honor only he can never be persuaded ; so that, after all, I fancy he is to blame, and no one else, for still remaining in the service.

Lord C. Indeed !—how is that ?

Cec. Because he never asked for dismissal. He

is ever saying, people would imagine him a coward, should he quit the service during war. He only wishes he may always have strength enough to sit on horseback ; and then says he'll part with every drop of blood he has, to serve his country. Well, he will be satisfied some time or other ; but then we poor children shall be without a father.

Lord C. Recollect, your father has been hitherto preserved from danger , and why should he not still continue as safe ? It is not every ball that hits.

Cec. But those, that do hit, commonly kill their man ; and, in the number, may there not be one that will reach father ?

Lord C. That's true indeed ; but what sweet little lady is this ?

Cec. My sister Helen.

Enter Helen.

So, Helen, you are come at last I see ; where have you been staying ?

Hel. Why, mother would make me help her do up father's portmanteau.

Cec. Where's the basket ? let me have it, sister.

Hel. Have you gathered berries enough to fill it ?

Cec. You shall see. [*emptying them into the basket.*] Your pardon, gentlemen.

Lord C. O, don't mind us. [*Whispering to the Officer.*] What lovely children !

Hel. [*whispering to Cec.*] Who may these be ?

Cec. [*whispering to Helen.*] Officers in lord Cornwallis's regiment.

Hel. Do they come for father ?

Cec. No ; they have arrived before the regiment, which will not go through the town till to-morrow, as father expected.

Hel. Ah, I wish all the officers, together with the regiment, were at Jericho.

Cec. Speak lower, Helen. If the gentlemen should hear you——

Hel. Let them hear me, if they like. What ! they come to take away father, and shall we not have leave to complain ?

Lord C. [*whispering the Officer.*] Methinks we are not looked upon too favorably here.

Offi. Why, my lord, don't you disclose yourself, and mention the good news you bring their father ?

Lord C. No. Their openness, as well as the affection they evince in favor their parents, delights me.

Cec. [*to Helen.*] Poor Bertram's hard at work, whilst we are chattering here without once thinking of him. I'll go, and help him. Stay you here, and take care how you speak before these gentlemen.

Hel. Go ; I know what's proper.

Cec. Here's my sister Helen ; I present her to you, gentlemen.

Helen. [*with a little forwardness.*] Your servant, gentlemen.

Lord C. [*to Cec.*] She has a countenance as resolute as yours is timid.

Cec. She'll stay here to entertain you, gentlemen ; for I must run and help my brother gather strawberries ; so that all of us may go back sooner to

father. Will you permit me to inform him of your visit? He'll be very happy to receive you.

Hel. No; he won't be very happy to receive you, neither will any one among us; we should be quite happy were we left alone for the present.

Cel. I hope your kindness will excuse this little madcap.

Hel. O yes, to be sure! excuse me? Why these gentlemen are sensible that little girls, when strangers are at table, must not speak a word; and I have twenty thousand things to tell father at parting, which will otherwise go near to break my heart.

Lord C. Dear children, don't fear any thing; you shall not be disturbed by us in your delightful conversation.

[Cecilia makes a grateful curtesy and withdraws.]

Hel. But pray tell me, gentlemen, what reason has the king for taking away a good father from us poor children? Does he think we don't want one to bring us up?

Lord C. No; but then do you think he don't want good soldiers to go out and fight?

Hel. And what necessity for fighting? Or, supposing there should be any, surely our father, when he would stay at home to give his children a good education, is not useless to his country.

Lord C. No, indeed; especially, my pretty little Helen, if his other little ones improve as much as you do.

Hel. I believe you jest. I know I am thought a little forward in the family; and I have heard

it said, that if I had but a cockade, I could not fail to make a tolerable soldier.

Lord C. Ha, ha, ha ! A little Amazon ! You would become a perfect hero !

Hel. I can tell you, that if I only had a sword, I would not be laughed at.

Lord C. Nay, if that's all, here's mine. I'll arm you with it according to martial rule.

Hel. Do. I should be very glad.

Lord C. [*presenting the sword, and stooping to kiss her.*] This is the first ceremony.

Hel. [*keeping him off.*] Softly ! softly ! I beseech you, sir.

Lord C. [*attempting it again.*] O, you are a charming child !

Hel. [*running from him.*] Brother ! sister !

Lord C. Mighty well, miss soldier ; ' a soldier, and afraid ' of me I perceive.

Hel. I afraid of you ! O no. But don't come too near, or I shall run and fetch father. He's an officer as well as you ; and won't suffer any one to hurt his little Helen.

Lord C. Heaven forbid I should hurt you : it was only pleasantry.

Enter Bertram and Cecilia.

Ber. [*coming boldly forward.*] You cried out just now, Helen ! I am come to your assistance.

Lord C. Against us, my little friend ?

Ber. Aye, any one who hurts my sister.

Hel. Thank you, brother ; but I did not mean to cry out quite so loud, and have no need of your

assistance ; for, you see, there's one I have disarmed. However, sir, [*returning Lord C. his sword,*] this once I grant you quarter. But don't come too near in future. I believe you understand me ?

Lord C. Why, I declare, you are an extraordinary little creature !

Cec. I am delighted to hear you talk ; but, gentlemen, we have gathered strawberries enough to share some with you. [*Presenting them the basket of strawberries.*] Let me request you to take some.

Lord C. No, indeed ; we don't intend to touch them ; they have a destination too respectable, for us to make free with them.

Cec. Those you take will be from our share ; and no harm will be done if we go without any. You belong to father's own regiment ; and 'tis fitting we should treat you with as much respect as we are able.

Hel. [*taking a nosegay from her bosom, and presenting it to Lord C.*] On that account, I beg you to accept this nosegay I gathered for myself. Father and mother have each had one, or I could not give you this ; but it belongs to me, sir, and I give it to you.

Lord C. And I, my dear, accept it with the greatest pleasure.

Hel. It is somewhat faded ; but, if you will stay a little, I'll gather you some jessamine, violets, and jonquils, in my garden.

Cec. Helen, you remember, I believe, the rose-bush before my window ; you may gather all the roses that are blown upon it.

Hel. Well, sir, shall I ?

Lord C. I thank you for your kindness, my dear child ; but the pleasure of conversing with you entertains me more than all the roses in the universe.

Hel. I have an idea strikes me. Possibly, you know what method an officer should take to quit the service honorably. Could you not afford us some good counsel to procure father's dismissal ?

Cec. If you could, we should be very glad to give you every thing we have.

Ber. [*who has hitherto amused himself by playing with the hilt of Lord C.'s sword, and looking at his uniform.*] O yes, if you could only tell us how to keep father at home, my drum, spontoon, cartouch-box, and accoutrements, should be yours.

Hel. [*smilingly looking down.*] And I would give you freely, what you just sought to take by force.

Lord C. So many charming things all at once ! Believe me, if I did but know——

Cec. [*sorrowfully.*] You did but know ! So then we only make things worse, and grieve you that you cannot be of service to us,

Hel. I don't give up so soon. Lord Cornwallis, colonel of the regiment, will very soon pass this way. We three will throw ourselves before him, hang upon his clothes, and not let go till he has granted our desire.

Cec. Yes, sister, he shall see our tears ; and we will tell him how extremely ill father has been all winter ; how sick he is at present ; and how much we should lament his going from us. Do you

think, he would be so cruel as to send us from him, and not grant our request ?

Lord C. I cannot think that of him, my good friends ; but, if he is not already thus far come on his way, there's room to suppose he will longer delay setting out from London ; and you know, in that case, you would lose your labor, as your father must march to-morrow. Happily, however, there is a gentleman, his particular friend, who can do every thing, as if he were my lord himself ; and he is at present with the regiment, serving as a volunteer.

Ber. A volunteer ?

Lord C. Yes ; so they call it ; one whose wish is to acquire a knowledge of the art of war, assisted by my lord's instruction. I can answer for it, he will grant whatever your father may wish.

Cec. And is he your friend ?

Lord C. Yes, truly.

Cec. Then, for pity's sake, sir, speak to him in father's behalf, that he may not be parted from his family, who live by his means ; and, if he must leave England, do soften, if you can, his service ; and at any time, should he be sick or wounded——

Hel. Wounded ! Don't wait, sir, till he is wounded ; but, in case a sabre should be raised against him, run in and save him from the blow.

Lord C. [*aside.*] How difficult I find it to keep concealed ! — No, generous little girls, fear nothing ; I'll be answerable for his safety with my life.

Cec. We may rely upon you then ? How much

you charm us ! Yet do not forget to speak of him to the volunteer, you just now mentioned. I would say more on this subject ; but your heart will tell you every thing I've left unsaid ; and our father, whom we shall lose to-morrow, must be waiting for us.

Lord C. Go, dear children ; but first take some trifle from me, as a recompense for that agreeable half hour I've spent in conversation with you. Here, my sweet Cecilia, take this ring, it is a little too big, but may soon be fitted to your finger.

Cec. [*refusing the ring.*] No, sir, mother would perhaps be displeased ; and so too would father, whose least reproach I would not for the world deserve, particularly as to-morrow he must leave us.

Lord C. You must absolutely take it. Should he be displeased, I'll undertake to reconcile him, when he joins the regiment, if I cannot, by my speaking to the volunteer, prevent his leaving England.

Cec. [*taking it.*] Well then he shall in that case return it ; and, if otherwise, I shall be very happy to remember you as often as I look upon it.

Hel. Come, sister ; it is high time we were gone.

Lord C. And you, my lovely Helen, I suppose, would not be sorry to remember me. See, here's a copper etui, gilt ; and, at the top, a composition stone, which is called a false diamond.

Hel. [*looking at it.*] I understand you ; but there's nothing false about it, except your words. 'Tis gold, I'm certain, and a real diamond. 'I won't have it. You have been plundering for it. My father's a captain, sir, as well as you ; but can't make such

presents, for he never went a plundering poor people's houses in his life.

Lord C. Take, take it ; there's no plundering in the case. It would be useless to me in the field, and therefore, if you will not have it as a present, keep it for me, until my return.

Hel. O, that I will do, with all my heart.

Lord C. And now perhaps you have a kiss to give me as security.

Hel. No, no ; I've told you the conditions.

Lord C. Well, I'll do all I'm able to win the prize.

Hel. And I'll keep the—the—you know what, sir, till that time. Come, brother.

Ber. Go first ; I'll follow you immediately. I've something I would say in private to this gentleman.

Lord C. I'll speak with you this moment.

[The officer, who had withdrawn some little time, returns, and gives Lord C. a pocket-book. They whisper.

Hel. [*whispering to Bertram.*] What ! and should you like a present too ?

Cec. [*likewise in a whisper.*] Fie, brother ! I should not have suspected you of so much meanness.

Ber. And fie *you*, sisters, who can entertain so mean an opinion of your brother ! I have something very different, and much more important, which I should like to ask about.

Hel. Well now, if I were in a merry mood, I could not but laugh, at the gravity with which you speak of your important something.

Ber. Aye, and were you not my sister, I would make you squeak, miss Saucebox, for suspecting me.

Hel. [going out with Cecilia.] Well, manage your important something with discretion.

SCENE II. *Lord Cornwallis, Officer, and Bertram.*

Lord C. I am glad, dear Bertram, you desire to stay. We were not quite acquainted ; but now, and particularly as my friend here tells me they have not yet repaired our chaise, we shall have a few more minutes to talk with each other.

Ber. So we shall ; but don't imagine I remain here to get something from you.

Lord C. How ?

Ber. Because you gave each of my sisters a present, you might fancy I wanted one ; but I protest, sir, I will not receive any thing.

Lord C. Unluckily for me, I have nothing to give.

Ber. Unluckily ? I'm glad you have not ; for now, neither can be tempted.

L. C. [aside to the officer.] I am charmed with his disinterestedness, and never saw a handsomer figure.

Ber. I have but one question to ask, sir ?

Lord C. And what's that, my friend ?

Ber. You told my sister, a gentleman was with the army as a volunteer. Pray what's a volunteer ?

Lord C. A volunteer is a soldier who may fight or not, just as he chooses.

Ber. If I were to turn soldier, it should be to fight ; and I would gladly be a volunteer on that condition.

Lord C. But a volunteer must have a great deal of money ; have you any ?

Ber. No ; but the king has. And pray is not he obliged to keep his soldiers ?

Lord C. No ; for, as a volunteer is not obliged to fight, it is but just he should support himself.

Ber. I am sorry to hear this ; but, if I wanted only bread and water, or should beg the regiment to receive me, sir, instead of my father ;—what then ?

Lord C. Poor child ! and what sort of a figure would you cut before a company ? You ought to have experience and authority.

Ber. If I have not enough of either to command, I must have surely to obey. Let me be any thing, provided I may serve.

Lord C. Would you be capable of long marches ?

Ber. I'll go as far as I am able ; and, when tired, be lifted among the baggage ; or I'll ride upon a cannon. Are you fearful I should lag behind ?

Lord C. But, if you were to serve instead of your father, you remember you must part with him, as much as if he went himself.

Ber. And don't you think I should rejoice to be the means of keeping him at home with my mother and sisters ? You would lose little by such a change. Unhappily, my dear father will not be able long to serve ; and I shall soon be what he was. I love a soldier's life from my heart. I know a great many marches, and can play them on my fife. Look, here's a book of songs ; 'tis called the *Grenadier's Delight*. I'll give it you. I know the whole by heart.

Lord C. [*aside to the officer.*] I have a thought.—*To Ber.*] I would not wish a better present ;

and, in return, I'll give you, not indeed a *book* of songs, my little Bertram, but a single song.

Ber. I may accept a song.

Lord C. [*feeling in his pocket.*] In the first place, here's one which you will give your father.

Ber. O, sir, he never sings now ; he likes no music but that of the cannon.

Lord C. That's nothing. I'm sure you'll both be pleased with this, even if you only read it. And here's one for you. [*taking a paper from his pocket-book.*

Ber. [*jumping for joy.*] O, thank you ! Let me see if I know it.

Lord C. No, Bertram ; you shall read them or sing them after we are gone. [*He puts the two papers together, and thrusts them into Bertram's pocket.*] Let me put them in your pocket ; and take care you don't lose them. Now farewell, my little friend ; and, since you love a soldier's life, I'll have you for my comrade.

Ber. [*jumping into his arms.*] Yes, I will be so, I'll always love you ; and the first engagement I am in, I'll all the while be at your side.

Offi. We will go, and tell the regiment.

Ber. Do ; and pray, sir, give me a good word.

Lord C. [*retiring with the officer.*] I feel how much the father's heart must bleed to quit such lovely children ; and rejoice, on that account, to be the bearer of such welcome tidings as the paper in Bertram's pocket will give him. Let us withdraw a little distance, where we may, unseen, remark him.

[They hide behind the trees.]



Ber. [sitting for a while profoundly thoughtful on the trunk of a tree ; then rising and walking to and fro.] Why should he desire to set father a singing ? [Takes the papers from his pocket.] Ha ! this paper's sealed ! There's something funny in it, I suppose. Now let me see my own. Is this a song ? It does not look like one. The words go, one after another, all along the line. [reading.] 'I promise to pay to Abraham Newland, or bearer, on demand, the sum of fifty pounds.' I don't know any tune that will suit these words. [reading again.] 'London, December 1, 1787, for the governor and company of the Bank of England, Philip

Stacy.' He means to make a fool of me, I fancy, in calling this a song. 'Tis all about money. Mr. Captain ! Mr. Captain ! *[Running out.]*

SCENE III. *Bertram, Captain Harlow, Mrs. Harlow, Helen, and Cecilia.*

Capt.H. Where is he ? *[Perceiving Bertram.]*
Bertram, where's my lord ?

Ber. *[looking about him.]* My lord ! I have not seen the least bit of a lord.

Hel. That handsome gentleman we talked with.

Cec. He who gave me this fine ring. Father says no one but a lord could make so rich a present.

Ber. *[vexed.]* Blockhead as I've shown myself, in not discovering who he was !

Cec. O, what a fine gentleman !

Hel. So good and so familiar ! O, my sweet etui ! I'll keep you all my life-time now.

Capt.H. How long has he been gone ?

Ber. This moment I was running after him.

Capt.H. To-morrow, fortunately, I shall join his lordship ; for it must be lord Cornwallis ; it is his cypher that's engraven on the etui ; and I can tell him then how much my children are obliged to his benevolence. I am however sorry I had not the opportunity of asking him to lodge one night with us. Should you not have been glad to entertain him, children ?

Ber. O yes, father. He called me comrade, when he took his leave.

Hel. For my part, though I like him, yet I'm

glad he's gone ; for, had he staid, we should not have been able to talk as if we loved you.

Capt. H. Helen's in the right. I should not have been free to mix my tears with yours, dear children, in his presence.

Mrs. H. And on that very account I wish we might have had his company. The violence, you must have done your sorrows, would, in that case, have enabled me to govern mine ; and, since we must lose you to-morrow——

Cel. O, mother, do not mention that.

Capt. H. Dear children, probably my absence will not be long. Peace cannot be far off ; it is the wish of every person ; and, no sooner shall that wish be realized, than I will instantly return, and never part with you again.

Mrs. H. But till peace is settled, you must unavoidably be absent from England ; and what comfort remains for us, whilst you are gone ?

Cec. With what pleasure would I give him back his ring, if he would leave you with us ?

Hel. And I his pretty etui !

Ber. And I too his new-fashioned song. See here, father. Was there ever such a song before ?

Capt. H. Let's see. [*reading a little.*] What bounty in this nobleman ! and what a charming way of obliging ! He has given you here an order for receiving a whole pocket-full of gold !

Ber. What, has he tricked me ? When you see him to-morrow, give him back his money. I won't

have it. But there's something else ; he has likewise given me a song for you.

Capt. H. A song for me, my little fellow ? You are dreaming !

Ber. [*drawing the sealed paper from his pocket.*] No ; here it is.

The Children. [*smiling, and approaching their father with looks of curiosity.*] A song ! a song !

Capt. H. Good heavens ! what's this ? The king's coat-of-arms ! [*He opens the packet with a trembling hand, and, looking at the signature, cries out*] and signet ! [*then casting his eyes over the three or four first lines, breaks forth again :*] Dear wife, and little ones, rejoice !

Mrs. H. Yes, if you stay with us.

Capt. H. Let me read the letter through. [*The children crowd round him, and stand silent while he reads to himself.*] O, unexpected joy ! [*continues reading.*] No, no ! it must all be a dream, in which my imagination forms brilliant chimeras !—Yet stay, I'm awake, and every thing is real, though I could never have hoped for such happiness.

Mrs. H. I'm impatient to know every thing.

Oec. Well, dear father, what is it ?

Hel. In what pain you keep us all, father !

Ber. Let me see your song ?

Capt. H. [*embracing his wife and children.*] I am to stay with you, my life ! We are not to be separated, my dear children ! [*giving Mrs. H. the letter.*] Yes ; read for yourself.

Mrs. H. I cannot ; I tremble in every limb.

The Children. [in a transport of joy.] Father is to stay with us ! father stays with us !

Capt. H. Yes, my children ; I shall not go to America, nor leave you, and yet continue in the service in a high and honorable station !

Mrs. H. In what manner ? how, my life ?

Capt. H. The king, informed (how I know not) of my illness, and commiserating the condition I am in, permits my staying here in England ; and, to recompense my services, (these are his own words,) confers upon me the command of Upnor Castle, with the rank of colonel.

Mrs. H. A colonel, my dear ?

Cec. Joy ! joy !

Hel. So then, father, there's not a greater man in all the army !

Ber. And you're a colonel ? are you ?

Capt. H. Yes ; and, for the first time in my life, entirely happy. But, my dear, [to *Mrs. H.*] shall I be pardoned, when I tell you, such an honor is not on account of any step I took to get it ! It has come, I cannot tell how.

Mrs. H. Yes ; I know that very well. I did what I could, although I never asked for such an honor, joined to so much happiness. They must be both, however, placed to the account of my solicitation.

Hel. Ah, the naughty man ! say I ; but mother took greater care of us than he did.

Cec. So you deceived us, father ?

Capt. H. Yes, my little dear ; but what could I

have done ? I've only this excuse to offer, that false modesty restrained me from requesting my dismissal, although I should have thought I could not be of any real service to my country. I was not however quite sensible of my condition, but now I feel it ; I feel within me, that my constitution is no longer fit for the fatigue of arms.

Mrs. H. And this false modesty would have been death to me, and left these children without a father, unless Providence had ordered your affairs much better. Every thing however is now pardoned. All I wish is, that the generous nobleman were here who brought us this glad news, that we might thank him for the kindness he has shown our little ones ; and also for this message, which, if the truth were known, I dare engage he has in some degree been instrumental in procuring ; for what likelihood is there that I, an unknown woman, should have succeeded far beyond what was wished.

Capt. H. At least that we might have enjoyed the opportunity of granting him the hospitality of one night's lodging with us.

Ber. We'll run different ways, and overtake him, if we can.

Capt. H. Go. It grieves me that I cannot follow you.

Hel. If we meet him, and he will only accompany us back, he shall have three kisses, instead of one.

SCENE IV. *Bertram, Captain Harlow, Mrs. Harlow, Cecilia, Helen, Lord Cornwallis, and the officer.*

Lord C. [running from behind the trees, and catching Helen in his arms.] Shall I? It is a match, my little maid. *[kissing her repeatedly.]*

Cec. and Ber. My lord! my lord!

Hel. [a little out of countenance.] You have almost scared me!

Capt. H. O my worthy general! what words will show you half my gratitude?

Mrs. H. How can my children and myself express our obligations? To whom we are indebted for such a blessing, we at present know not; but your lordship is the bearer of a paper, which restores to me a husband, and a father to my children.

Lord C. You and they, dear madam, are debtors to the king for this blessing. I have done nothing more than solicit his bounty, wishing that I might prove the channel through which it should flow. Accidentally hearing of your application, I determined to support it with my little interest; and, if possible, procure more than you solicited. You owe this interference to my knowledge of your husband's merit, as I was convinced how much he had instructed his inferior officers, and been of benefit to his companions in arms above him. Upon this account I did not think it reasonable that he should be compelled to endure the fatigues of a foreign campaign, when his infirmity made service

painful to him. And further, in order to show how heartily I felt interested in this affair, I with pleasure took advantage of our march so near his habitation, myself to bring down the news of his success, to gladden the hearts of his wife and children.

[He holds out his hand to Captain Harlow, who clasps it with transport.

Capt. H. I can scarcely realize that I have met with such a generous friend, who, of his own accord, has seconded an application which the affection of a beloved wife was making for me, without my knowledge ! No one, with less benevolence than your lordship, could have so heartily endeavored to promote the happiness of an afflicted family.

Mrs. H. Then, too, you have made such princely presents to our children !

Cec. I am now ashamed that I took this ring. I did not think it was of so much value.

Lord C. I must own it is very pretty, but much more so on your charming hand. It is indeed so altered, I no longer know it.

Hel. Neither would you, I suppose, sir, your etui ; and therefore I'll not speak a word about it.

Ber. As for me, I give you back your song. It is not what you meant to let me have.

Lord C. Then be it a mistake ; and, since I have already made it, pardon me ; to which I hope your good father will add another favor ;

that his Bertram be made an ensign. I'll give order for it, if he chooses I should.

Capt. H. If I choose, my lord ! You are the guardian-angel sent to succour us !

Ber. But is it in your own regiment ?

Lord C. Yes, my little friend.

Ber. O how rejoiced I am ! I'll go this moment with you, and the name of my father shall not quickly be forgotten in the army.

Capt. H. You have conferred many favors on me ! Would you not favor me with one more ?

Lord C. I apprehend your meaning ; and, so far from not consenting, beg you to accept it, namely, a bed in your house for one night for my companion and myself. [*Captain and Mrs. Harlow bow respectfully.*] Provided Helen pleases !

Hel. O, since father is to remain among us, stay as long as you please.

Cec. I may hope, my lord, that now you will consent to eat a few more strawberries ?

Lord C. You have made them as much the sweeter to us, as I thought your arrival would have made them bitter.

Ber. Yes, my lord, come in, and honor my father by eating with us ; and, in future, I will do whatever I am able, to deserve a second honor like it—in your lordship's tent.

MAN IS BEST AS HE IS.

Mr. Howell, having in his hand a stuffed dead parrot, comes in, ascends a chair, and ties it to a cord, suspended from the ceiling.

Mr. H.

 FANCY that unlucky Rowland will not reach it at this height. I can scarcely keep any thing from such a meddling boy. [*He puts the chair in its place again, and goes out.*]

Bowl. [*entering a moment after.*] Where, in the name of goodness, can father have poked our poor dead parrot? I observed it in his hand, when he first came into the room; but saw him afterwards go out without it. [*He looks round the apartment; and at last espies the parrot hanging from the ceiling.*] Ah ha! there he is!

[*He takes a run, and jumps with all his might, but wants three feet, or more, to reach the parrot.*]

If I were but as active as our greyhound.

[*He pulls a chair into the middle of the room, and, mounting upon it, is yet too short; he stands on tiptoe, and jumps, but all without effect. He instantly comes down, and runs for a folio volume, lettered 'Plutarch,' which he puts on the chair, mounts on it, and holds out his hands*]



Shall I never reach the mark ? I want sadly to find out how Nicholas has stuffed it. Let me take one more jump.

[He bends his knees to spring, when Vincent entering catches him at work, and hums the following words.

Vin. ' Well leap'd, in good truth ! ' But don't let me disturb you ; for, however active you may be, you'll need a thousand ups and downs before you reach it. Such a bit of manhood jump so high ! Come down. Let me get up. I think I shall not want your Plutarch.

[He pulls Rowland by the jacket till he comes down, then gets up in his stead, and, lifting both hands, is still a great way from the parrot.]

Row. [*bursting into a laugh.*] Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! good Mr. 'Bit-of-manhood !' By the manner of your speaking, any one would have certainly fancied you as tall as——as, at least, the monument.

Vin. But, if I step upon the book.

[He stands upon it, is a little nearer, but not near enough to touch the parrot. Rowland jumps about and laughs incessantly.]

'Tis not my fault, but your Plutarch's, which, though thick enough to read in, is not so to make a footstool. Only think, if there had only been a few more clever fellows in antiquity, the parrot would have certainly been mine.

Row. Or rather mine ; for, in that case, I should have got it first.

Vin. Not that I care about it.

Row. No indeed, not more than Reynard, in the fable, cared about the grapes ; possibly the parrot's too green !—hey, brother ?

Vin. What's the use of taking it down ? I can see it very well from this distance.

Row. [*bantering Vincent.*] Yes, it is a charming point of view ! But, hark ye, Vincent, I don't think there so much difference between our heights at last, though you are three years older.

Vin. [*aside.*] How vain the little creature is !
[*Aloud.*] Perhaps you'd like to measure with me ?

Row. Yes, with all my heart.

[They come together, back to back, and make the most of their respective heights ; but Rowland stands tiptoe. Vincent is astonished that he is so tall, till, looking down, he perceives the cause.]

Vin. Ah, slyboots ! is it even so ? Yes, indeed ; I grant you, if you're at those tricks. Come, put down your heels.

Row. [*then appearing greatly shorter than his brother.*] It is a plaguey thing to be so short !

Mr.H. [*coming in.*] Because you can't reach Poll ? You mean so, don't you, Rowland ?

Row. You've been watching us then, father ?

Mr.H. No ; but don't you see your feet have left it written on my Plutarch ?

Vin. Had we been as tall as you, we should then have been able to see Poll a great deal nearer.

Mr.H. Yes ; and plagued him after he was dead as much as you did while he lived. And yet you're tall enough for any sort of mischief.

Vin. O, father, what pleasure we should have if we were both as tall as you !

Mr.H. I know you well enough ; you would not, even in that case, be content.

Vin. 'Tis true, I would rather be as tall as — what d'ye call him, the giant, who came down to show himself for money, at the fair ?

Row. Aye, Hurlothrumbo ; but at present, as we are wishing, and as wishes cost nothing, we need hardly stop. You recollect our tallest cherry-tree. Well, I'd be as tall as that ; as tall as — tall as Gulliver of Lilliput.

Mr.H. And why ?

Row. Because I should want neither ladder nor pole when the fruit is ripe. Do but think a little, brother ; how delightful it would be, to walk about

the orchard, with our head among the branches of the trees, and browse on cherries, pears, and apples, and gather them as we do currants from the bush; would not this be charming entertainment?

Vin. One might likewise walk along the streets, and look into the rooms on either side of the way, three stories high. Ha! ha! I fancy we should put the people in a fright!

Row. I should not fear the carriages when I had occasion to cross the street. It would be only necessary to straddle. Look you—thus: [*he strides*] and I should see carts, wagons, men, horses, and rail-road trains, all pass under me, and should smile in derision of their littleness.

Vin. You know the river that goes by our house in town? We must now take a boat to cross it, or go over one of the bridges. Well, I might walk through it, which would be refreshing in summer.

Row. And, besides this, you know, we should be stronger, if we were bigger. Should a bull venture to attack me, I'd twist off his neck, just as if he were a rabbit; or else chuck him up two hundred yards or more in the air, while he should be so occupied about his falling, that, when down, he would entirely forget to get up and run away.

Vin. We should not then need horses for the plough, as we might draw it ourselves; and in ten steps get quite across a very spacious field. I saw, last Thursday, more than fifty men at work in driving piles to make a causeway. And how hard they worked! Well, with only such a hammer as

my size would let me raise, I might, in a single day, despatch their work, and not be half so tired at night.

Mr. H. Fine talking this ; but do you know that, after all your *would be's*, you are two blockheads ?

Vin. How, father, two blockheads ?

Mr. H. Yes, to think you would be happier than at present, were you bigger.

Vin. But, father, if we were able to do a great deal more than we do at present ?

Row. For example : would it not be quite convenient, if we could reach things very high, and take a deal of ground at a step in travelling ?

Mr. H. Before I answer, inform me if, in becoming so very tall, you would have every thing else remain as little as it was before your alteration ?

Row. Certainly, father.

Vin. Yes ! there should be only we three giants.

Mr. H. Thank you ; for my part, I'm contented with my size, and wish not to change it.

Row. Yet I think we ought not to be near so big as you ; for, otherwise, it would be the children's part to whip their father.

Mr. H. It is a happy circumstance for me, that I shall not, in a hurry, be exposed to so much shame and danger.

Row. O, I would spare you, recollecting how often you have shown me favor.

Vin. [to *Mr. H.*] Then you don't wish to be bigger ?

Mr. H. No, indeed ; but let us now speak for you and your brother only ; and observe what would result from being bigger. In the first place then

Rowland, if, as you just now wished, you were as that cherry-tree, how would you be able, as at present, to go out and take your walk among so many trees as fill our orchard? You would consequently be obliged to crawl upon all-fours, and even then, find it very difficult to proceed.

Row. But you forget, father, how easily I might put my foot against the first tree standing in my way and root it up. It would be a mere wheat-stalk to me.

Mr. H. Thereby you would pursue a very prudent plan! and, in proportion as you wanted much more fruit to satisfy your increased appetite, you'd destroy the trees that bear it! But let's go a little farther than our orchard. There are many roads about us, shaded by rows of trees, whose branches overhang the pathway. Well, men of common height can walk beneath these branches at their ease, and find the shade quite comfortable in the heat of summer, particularly at noon-day; but you would be obliged to walk in the middle of the road, without shade. And what would become of you, when you should have to make your way through a forest? What a furious overthrow of trees would you make before you could clear yourself a path!

Row. I should be no more fatigued than now to make a hole sufficient for my passage thro' a hedge.

Vin. I would uproot the tallest oaks, like that same mad Grecian, mentioned in my English Sophocles.

Mr. H. I should pity those condemned to live near you. But, with such long legs as you would have, you would take it into your head, no doubt, to travel?

Row. Travel ? Why, father, I'd go from one end of the world to the other.

Mr. H. Like enough ! And without halting, I suppose ! For where, please to tell me, would you find a house, a chamber, or a bed, half big enough for your enormous stature ? You would certainly be forced to lie all night abroad upon a haystack. That would be quite charming ! Don't you think so ?

Row. I should find myself as badly off as poor Gulliver at Lilliput.

Vin. Aye ; you have not, I can see, brother, made your giant system quite perfect. No ; you must have the rest of mankind as big as yourself.

Mr. H. That plan is more generous, I must own. But, in that case, would the ground suffice to feed so many monstrous giants ? In a parish, which at present supports five hundred people, twenty of them would not find provisions. In eight and forty hours, each of us would consume an ox, and easily drink a butt or puncheon of milk at breakfast.

Vin. O, I would have the oxen bigger likewise.

Mr. H. And how many of such oxen might be put to graze in a common field ?

Vin. Truly, only a very few indeed.

Mr. H. I perceive then, that, for want of pasture, we should soon want cattle.

Vin. Well then, there's only one thing more to order, and the matter's settled. We must have the world grow bigger.

Mr. H. Nothing puzzles you, I see. To be a few yards taller, you would at a minute's notice, stretch

all nature. It is a great thought indeed ; and yet, I fancy, you'd be far from finding any capital advantage, after every thing was settled as you wished.

Vin. And why not, dear father ?

Mr. H. Can you tell me what proportion means ?

Vin. Proportion ? No.

Mr. H. Then stand here by your brother. Right. Now which is tallest, you or Rowland ?

Vin. You can see yourself, father ; he does not reach my ear.

Mr. H. Now stand by me. Which is shortest ?

Vin. I am, unfortunately.

Mr. H. It seems then, Vincent, that you are both big and little ?

Vin. No, father : I beg your pardon ; I'm neither big nor little, to speak properly. I'm big respecting Rowland ; but I'm little with respect to you.

Mr. H. And if we were to grow, all three of us, ten times taller, would you be less respecting me, or bigger in respect to Rowland, than at present ?

Vin. No, father ; for there would always be an equal difference.

Mr. H. Then that is what proportion means. It is regular gradation.

Vin. I understand you now.

Mr. H. In that case, let us return to your idea. If, in nature, every thing became bigger, still preserving its present proportion, you would still be exactly at the point where you first set out. You would not then be able to frighten people in their garrets, by just looking at them through the win-

dow ; you would find it no less difficult to wade across the water, or drive piles without assistance, than at present ; and be equally unable to twist off, as you expressed it, a bull's neck, or send him up two hundred yards into the air ; he would be still as much bigger than yourself as he now is.

Vin. Yes ; I see he would.

Mr. H. Have you heard us, Rowland ?

Row. Yes, father.

Mr. H. And now know the meaning of proportion ?

Row. You shall see. Proportion is when any thing grows larger, and another does the same.

Mr. H. But can you give me an example ?

Row. [*after thinking a little while.*] I believe I can ; thus : It would be vain for me to tell my brother boastingly that, when three years have elapsed, I should be three years older than he ; for he still would be oldest, because he also would be three years older than he is at present.

Mr. H. And would the carriages then pass between your legs ?

Row. No, certainly ; I should be still obliged to keep upon the side-walks, if I would not have them throw me down.

Mr. H. And what advantage, Vincent, would you then derive from such a general change of nature as your pride would introduce ?

Vin. I don't see any.

Mr. H. Your wishes then are absurd, since their accomplishment cannot make you more happy.

Vin. You are right, father. It would have been better if we had wished to be little ; yes, quite little.

Row. What, as little as Gulliver's Lilliputians ?

Vin. Why not ?

Mr.H. Ha, ha ! another strange conceit ! What can be your motives for this wish ?

Vin. Because, among other good consequences, one would never fear a famine ; since a very little wheat—a handful only—would make bread enough to serve a man for four and twenty hours.

Mr.H. Why, yes, there might be some savings !

Vin. Besides which, we should not then have cause to go to war with one another ; as a place, no bigger than our garden, would be large enough for a mighty city. Men therefore, having more room than was needed, would never go to war with one another, as I have heard you say they do, for obtaining an inch or two of land.

Mr.H. I won't answer for them on that point, acquainted as I am with human folly ; but I will not disturb so charming an arrangement with my fears ; and am contented therefore to suppose I see both peace and plenty flourishing, and the golden age, as you have read in Ovid, thanks to your good management, brought back again among us !

Vin. But that's not all. My tutor tells me, that little creatures are a deal more delicate and perfect in themselves than great ones ; have a much more piercing sight, a finer sense of hearing ; and in perception of smell are much superior. Is it true, father ?

Mr.H. In general it is.

Vin. Thus, if we were a great deal less than at present, we should see, and hear, and smell many things, of which we now have no knowledge.

Mr. H. These advantages, it is true, would be very precious ; yet I own I should be sorry to renounce, for such advantages, the universal empire we now exercise on every thing that breathes.

Vin. There would be no occasion to renounce it ; for remember, as you have often told me, man bears rule much more by his understanding, than by mere strength of body.

Mr. H. True ; because his strength of body is exactly proportioned to his understanding. But bestow upon a Lilliputian's frame the greatest and sublimest genius—give him even our inventions and our arts, advanced to that perfection they possess among us ; do you think he would be able to employ our instruments, and manage properly the meanest of our numberless machines or engines ? How would he defend himself against wild beasts, when even the dog he keeps within his dwelling would, without designing any mischief, crush him under foot ?

Vin. But what if every thing becomes proportionably little ? There, father, I think the argument is in my favor.

Mr. H. Only to confound yourself ; for, granting this proportionality of littleness, men immediately lose all the advantage you would give them. Their hilliputian harvests would not keep them from the fear of famine ; and their wars, while they continued equally frequent and ferocious as at present,

would be more ridiculous. The inferior animal might have finer organs, and more delicate sensations ; and perhaps too, with his littleness, which could not but be laughed at, he would take upon him, as you do, to alter and reform the universe.

Vin. I think, father, you're much too hard upon us ; we can't arrange any thing to please you.

Row. For this reason, brother, because you know nothing about the matter. There is but one way, and that is, to order things as they should be.

Mr. H. Bravo ! so you take the man of consequence, and reformation of God's works upon you ?

Row. Yes, as well as Vincent.

Mr. H. Well then, let me know how you would settle the affair ? your system must be very curious, I suppose.

Row. Why, father, we only want one thing. We want to have a harder body, one as hard as iron.

Mr. H. And why so ?

Row. You see the splinter here in my little finger. It seems nothing ; yet you can't imagine how much pain it gives me.

Mr. H. My poor little man ! I'm sorry for it.

Row. And the wound I gave my head about a month ago, by tumbling down stairs. It is not yet well ; feel here, father ; there ; that's the place.

Mr. H. I see the scar.

Row. What pleasure would it be to play with Pompey, and not fear the rogue would bite me. Besides, when I am old enough to be a soldier and go to battle, I should laugh at balls and bullets. Nay,

my head would blunt the broadest sword that struck it ; would not that be vastly pretty ?

Mr. H. It would, indeed.

Row. In that case we should want for nothing ; we should be quite perfect ; shouldn't we, father ?

Mr. H. [*taking an orange from his pocket.*] See here, my little fellow ! smell this orange.

Row. O how fine ! It must be very good to eat. Do you design to give it to me, for having settled matters better than my brother ?

Mr. H. No ; it is not for you.

Vin. For me then ?

Mr. H. Nor for you. I mean it for a certain—I don't know if I should say, a certain person ; but, however that be, one more perfect than you are.

Vin. And who is that, father ?

Mr. H. You will wonder, very likely, when I tell you who :—that negro figure on my chimney-piece.

Row. You joke, father ! why, he can neither see, nor eat, nor smell.

Mr. H. And yet he is made of iron.

Row. And that's the very reason why he cannot.

Mr. H. You would certainly have sacrificed the satisfaction that results from seeing, smelling, and eating, to the boast that you could never break your head by falling from my chimney-piece ; for, were you made of iron, as you wished, you would be only fit to stand there with my other bronzes.

Row. O, I don't mean so, father ; I would be living while I had this iron body.

Mr. H. And how then could it be animated by

that blood, and those juices that keep up our life ? By what means could its nerves be flexible, and have that sensibility which makes us so expert or ready in the use of every limb, and renders the enjoyment of our senses so delightful !

Row. O, dear me ! I see my scheme is hardly better than my brother's.

Vin. But, father, since you're so clever in destroying our thoughtless plans, it is your turn to provide us with better in their stead.

Mr. H. And why should I provide a plan ? I am fully satisfied with that which God's providence has already established. Yes, dear children, I am sensible that we are completely furnished with whatever can promote our happiness. Superior in our conformation to all other animals, by virtue of our genius we tame or control the small number of those who surpass us in strength. If we have not the rapidity of stags and horses, we can manufacture a composition which will overtake the one while he is running from us, and we can mount the other to direct him whither we think proper. We have not the wings of a bird, yet we can give wings to tall trees that grow in forests ; and these inanimate things when moulded into masts and paddles, put on shipboard, and impelled by wind or steam power, visit the remotest regions. Our sight, less piercing than an insect's, is not bounded to the narrow space in which we move about, but can take in an ample horizon, and contemplate the great miracles of nature. We are unable to gaze,

like an eagle, at the sun ; but we have invented an instrument which seems to draw us nearer to that luminary, so that we may measure his immensity of distance, and observe the place that he possesses in the midst of an infinity of stars, obscured by his superior brightness. All our other senses contribute likewise to procure us a succession of enjoyments, and to promote or ensure our safety. Conscious of our genius, we are every day in search of new discoveries ; we disarm the thunder, or tell it where to fall ; we make one element counteract another ; we oppose the beneficial warmth of fire to the inclemency of frost ; and keep the land from being overflowed by inundations of the sea. Sometimes we descend into the darkest bowels of the earth, and bring out those precious metals which we purify ; and, if needed, by an ingenious process of mixing them together, form new substances. And sometimes we mark out granite rocks that overhang and seem ready to fall upon our heads, precipitate them from the height into the vallies, and soon after compel them to re-ascend in sumptuous edifices, or in stately pyramids that pile their summits in the clouds. The society, which we form with our fellow creatures for the supply of our mutual wants, obtains for us, in return for our own toil, the labor of ten thousand hands, all eager to procure us the conveniences of life. Upon whatever side we turn, we have at our command the various products of the universe, all brought together for our use. The sciences exalt

our souls, and charm our faculties. The arts, by having introduced such numberless machines, assist us in our labor, or refresh us when we seek repose. Memory and reflection both give us the advantages acquired or enjoyed by all who have preceded us. Together with the pleasing idea of our own personal existence, we derive happiness from others ; by the virtues of compassion and beneficence ; and by the connexions of kindred and friendship. Our happiness however depends upon ourselves alone, amid the host of human creatures who surround us ; sure of obtaining it, if we only moderately use our strength, and make a constant application of our reason to the business of determining our conduct. So that, if our happiness be interrupted by our own imprudence or rashness, it is owing to our own folly. We then seem to be children, like yourselves, who, instead of gratefully enjoying the conveniences and comforts of our situation, and courageously enduring its few evils, vex ourselves with wishes for ideal blessings, or disgrace our nature with a lack of manly courage. Man is best as he is.

Vin. Well, father, upon the whole, your plan is best, and must be right.

Row. Yes, I think so too ; otherwise that parrot, which I tried so hard to reach, had he been as large in proportion as I wanted to be, would have been a monstrous bird to stuff and hang up in a room.

THE SCHOOL FOR STEPMOTHERS.

A DRAMA, IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS.

MR. AND MRS. FLOYD.

FRANÇOIS,

PRISCILLA,

ANNE,

Mr. Floyd's Children.

CHARLES,

PERCIVAL,

Mrs. Floyd's Children.

DANIEL, a Servant.

The SCENE is in Mr. Floyd's Garden.

SCENE I.

Francis, alone.

 ONCE more I am in my garden, where I have not been these six months ! What a pleasure every object gives me ! Here is the little summer house, where I used to breakfast so frequently with my dear mother. If she were still living, what happiness for both of us ! She would receive me with open arms ; and I should have many little things to tell her. Alas ! *[beginning to cry]* I have forever lost her ; and, if we are still to love each other, we can only do so in another world. My dear mother,

could you only hear me, it would be some comfort, since you cannot come back to see your Frank. Instead of you, I indeed have a mother ; but a mother, as they call it, in law ; and that, as we are told, is just as much as if one said, a cruel mother. What then am I to do ? I shall not dare to look upon her. O, if I might at least have lived with grandmother ! But it cannot be ; father will have me here, although poor mother is dead. Alas, I shall never be able to live here ; I know it. I will therefore only see my dear father and sisters, and go back. Yes ; I must and will return.

Enter Daniel.

Dan. What, master Francis ? is it you, come back again ? How goes it with you ?

Fran. In health not much amiss, dear Daniel. And pray how are you ?

Dan. Quite well ; not a penny for the apothecary from me ! My draughts are made at the *George*. But what is the matter ? I see you have been crying.

Fran. [*wiping his eyes.*] Crying ?

Dan. Yes, crying ! O you cannot conceal it. Have you met with any accident ?

Fran. None, since I left my grandmother's.

Dan. O, I understand ; you weep for your mother ; but then you have another.

Fran. A stepmother you mean ? If I could only shun her ! But how fare my poor dear sisters ?

Dan. How ? ah ! bad enough. At six they must be up. I would not advise them to lie a minute after. They would pay dear for their drowsiness.

Fran. But what have they to do so early ?

Dan. Their mother knows where to find them work ! She rules us all like slaves ! and I myself must get up with the rest ! I rose at seven this morning ; and, early as it was, saw both your sisters hard at work in the parlor.

Fran. But I ask you, at what ?

Dan. Working for their young brothers-in-law.

Fran. Yes, I am told that second mothers never spare their husbands' children, while they favor their own ; and I imagine, I must go to work too. But what has become of all my pinks and tulips ?

Dan. O, they are all taken away !

Fran. By whom ?

Dan. By Charles and his brother.

Fran. So I have lost all my pretty flowers ; and those two wicked little fellows have destroyed them. They have nothing now to do but to take the garden from me likewise. Look, here they come.

Enter Charles and Percival.

Cha. [*whispering Percival.*] Who is that young master with Daniel ? If it were but Francis ?

Per. [*whispering to Daniel.*] Is it he ?

Dan. [*answering drily.*] Yes, gentlemen.

Cha. O, my dear brother, welcome ! We have wished to see you !

Fran. [*shrinking back.*] Have we been acquainted with each other long enough, that you should thus embrace me ?

Cha. We are not acquainted with you I acknowledge, but we all are three brothers.

Fran. Yes, half brothers, sir.

Cha. Why half? If your father loves our mother, and she loves him, why should not we love one another? They are man and wife, and we are therefore brothers.

Fran. If we are brothers, have you a greater right here than I have?

Per. [*aside.*] How quarrelsome he is!

Cha. Your father has let us work these three weeks in this garden.

Fran. I was in it first, and surely you will not drive me out?

Per. Come, Charles; let us be gone, and leave him in his peevish humor.

Cha. No, no, Percival; we must stay, and be good friends with each other.

Per. Do you like the sulky fellow so much?

Fran. The sulky fellow! do you call me sulky?

Per. Yes, and envious, and——

Fran. You dare insult me then? and even in my garden here?

Per. You began; but I'm your match! mind that.

Cha. Hear me, Percival! Would you strike your brother? Come along, and let us not vex our new father; and more particularly so on the very day when he is to see his son. [*he draws him away.*]

Per. Well, I will go and tell mother. [*Exit.*]

Fran. My anxieties are now beginning. They will tell their mother I have insulted them, and she will incense father against me. Unhappy that I am; do you not think, Daniel, I am to be pitied?

Dan. Indeed you are ; take heart, however. I will be your friend ; and we shall then, I think, be able to make head against them.

Fran. Yes ; but my father ?

Dan. Let me alone with him. I know a thousand tricks of these new comers, which I will tell him about. They have spoilt your garden, killed your flowers, and called you names. I warrant you they will be badly off.

Fran. So then, my good Daniel, you will stand up for me ?

Dan. Ay, as sure as my name is Daniel.

Fran. Thank you ! thank you ! I am not without a friend I see, though I have lost mother. Did you notice what handsome clothes they wore ? Who worked them ? can you tell ?

Dan. Their mother.

Fran. Yes, I was thinking so. She will always be employed upon her favorites ; but pray who will ornament such clothes for me ?

Dan. Why, if you want such, you must work them yourself.

Fran. Had they not new jackets likewise ?

Dan. Yes ; they were given them as a present from your father on the day of his marriage.

Fran. O, he did not make me such a present. I was sent with these old clothes into the country. It is too much ! I cannot support the thought ! My poor mother is dead, and my farther forgets me ! You only are left to befriend me !

Dan. Be comforted ! matters may turn out better

than you think ; but, in the first place, you must see your new mother. So follow me, and put on a cheerful face as if you were rejoiced to see her.

Fran. That I cannot do.

Dan. But you *must*, however it may go against your feelings. I do so, although I detest her. Would you think it ? she begins to tell me that I must be less frequent in my visits to the alehouse ; I that was accustomed to spend half the day there, in the lifetime of my last dear mistress ! She indeed was quite a lady. Things are marvellously altered now, and we must alter with them. Patience ! when we are alone, I will tell you what more is to be done. At present follow me.

Fra. Will she see by my eyes I have been crying ?

Dan. Why, you are crying still.

Fran. Then I will not go now ; she will ask the reason of my tears. What answer should I give her ?

Dan. You might say, that, coming home, and thinking of your dear mother, you fell a crying.

Fran. But, provided she spoke about my quarrel with her children ?

Dan. Tell her, that they began it ; and call me to witness what you say. But here she comes. Go and salute her boldly.

Enter Mrs. Floyd.

Mrs. F. Where is he ? Is it you, my dearest Francis ? Then I have all my family together at last. [*She embraces him with tenderness.*] How sweet a countenance ! and how happy am I, that I can call so amiable a child my son !



Fran. I should be happy too, if I could rejoice ; and yet——[*sighing.*]

Mrs. F. What is the matter, my dear ? You seem quite sad, my charming little man ! [*Francis cries afresh, and cannot speak.*] You turn away and cry. What causes these tears ? Won't you inform me what afflicts you ?

Fran. Nothing.

Fran. It is enough, however, to distress me. Say what gives you all this sorrow, and I will comfort you, if possible. If your father or sisters were to see you, they might fancy that you met with some misfortune in coming home ; and they are

pleased in thinking that they are so soon to see you. Would it grieve you to embrace them ?

Fra. Believe me, I can have no greater pleasure ! But shall I embrace mother ? It is for her that I cry.

Mrs. F. She died nine months ago ; and do you still weep for her ?

Fran. Yes ; all my life ! O, my dear mother !

Mrs. F. Be calm, my little dear ! Endeavor to divert your thoughts, and let us speak of her no longer, since it gives you so much sorrow.

Fran. No ; on the contrary, let me be always speaking of her, if you mean that I should feel any comfort. Would you have your children so soon forget you after you were dead ?

Mrs. F. Dear little fellow ! [*embracing him.*] You loved her very much ?

Fran. I find so ; much more now than when she lived. She was so good !

Mrs. F. I wish I were only able to restore her to you ; this I cannot do, and therefore I will take her place, poor little fellow, in your bosom. I will love you as she did ; and be a mother to you.

Fra. But it never can be you that bore me, nursed me, and brought me up. She was my real mother, and you only my step-mother.

Mrs. F. But why give me such a name ? I have not called you my step-son.

Fran. Pray pardon me ! I said it not to displease you. I begin to think you very kind ; at least you seem so. But then you have children of your own, and must, of course, love them much more than me,

Mrs. F. You shall not find it so. Some few days hence we shall be better acquainted than we can be now, and you shall see if my affection will not make you think yourself my son.

Fra. If it could be without forgetting my mother—

Mrs. F. I would not wish you to forget her ; on the contrary, we will speak often of her, and your tenderness shall be a pattern for my children. Come, I long to introduce you to them.

Fran. O, I have seen them already. Have they not complained of my behavior ?

Mrs. F. No, my little man. Have you had any quarrel ? I should be very sorry for that, as all my wish is to behold you tenderly united to each other, like real brothers.

Fran. I wish nothing more. But where is my father and my sisters ? Let me see them.

Mrs. F. Your father will soon be here. He went this morning to despatch some business out of doors, that he might have the afternoon to himself ; in the mean time, I will take you to your sisters, who will tell you what you are to think of me.

Fran. I wish them to speak of you, but not first. I have a deal to say of my mother. [*As they go out, Charles and Percival enter on the opposite side.*]

SCENE II. *Charles, Percival.*

Per. Why did you stop me from complaining to mother ? I keep company with that little snarler ! No, never. When his father comes home, I will

tell him what a waspish son he has, in order that he may teach him to behave a little better.

Cha. Do you think then that father will not be vexed, when told of this difference between you ? and would it please you to afflict him ?

Per. Certainly I should be sorry for it. Yet what can I do ? if this little gentleman is not corrected for his rudeness the first day of coming home, there will be nothing but disputes hereafter. He will be always affronting us. I am not very deliberate in such cases ; I shall certainly be warm, and tell him what he ought to know ; and if hereafter he should take airs upon him, as just now——

Cha. I hope, Percival, you would not beat him !

Per. But you do not suppose that I will let myself be beat by him !

Cha. No, certainly.

Per. Then what ought I to do ?

Cha. To-morrow, very likely, we shall see ; but now it would be improper to disturb his father's satisfaction in seeing him.

Per. Be it now, to-morrow, or the next day, it is all the same to Percival ; but the sooner, in my opinion, the better.

Cha. Brother, I beseech you, wait a little longer. Francis cannot be so sulky as you suppose.

Per. And yet, sure, I know him as well as you.

Cha. His father and his sisters say he is very condescending and good-natured.

Per. Yes, indeed, he showed his condescension

and good-nature, when he turned his back upon me in reply to my civility.

Cha. That was not well ; but then he does not know us yet.

Per. He might have tried to know us.

Cha. How you talk ! perhaps he was grieved.

Per. And are we to suffer for it ?

Cha. No ; but brothers must pass over many things which others have a right to take amiss.

Per. It appears to me that he scorns to look on us as brothers.

Cha. No ; I cannot persuade myself of that.

Per. Well, let him beware. I shall not put up with any insult from him. But he's coming here with his sisters ; I will withdraw. I cannot bear to think of such a snappish gentleman.

Cha. Let us stay and share in their amusement.

Per. I might possibly disturb them, and will go.

Cha. If you are resolved, I will follow you.—
[*Aside.*] I must do all in my power to soften him.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *Francis, Priscilla, Anne.*

Pris. [*holding Francis by the hand.*] But why afflict yourself, dear brother ? Our affliction cannot bring mother to life again.

Fran. But will you promise me, at least, that we will think a little of her every time we meet ?

Pris. Yes, brother, I shall always think I see her with us, just as when she was alive.

Fran. [*looking affectionately at them.*] My dear sisters ! this doubles the delight I have in seeing you.

Pris. Anne and I have been wishing, this long while, to see you.

Anne. And so have I, brother ; for now we can play all together as we used to do. Charles and his brother can play with us too. O, how fine that will be ! [*jumping for joy.*]

Fran. Pshaw ! no more about your Charles and his brother, if you love me.

Pris. How !

Fran. They would but interrupt our pastime ; they are good for nothing but to carry complaints about us to their mother, and convey away our things.

Pris. Can you think so badly of them, brother ?

Anne. Look here, Frank ? [*showing a work-box.*]

Fran. And who gave you that ?

Anne. Why, Percival ; he went out and bought it for me, with a crown that his mother gave him.

Pris. See too this morocco pocket-book. It was a present made to Charles ; and he gave it me.

Fran. Ay, ay ! I see you understand each other's meaning, and will all four of you be against me.

Pris. and Anne. Be against you !

Fran. Certainly. I know they hate me, having taken all my flowers away, and spoilt my garden.

Pris. Who has taken all your flowers away, and spoilt your garden ?

Fran. Those two little fellows whom you seem to admire so much.

Pris. We do not understand you. Have you seen your garden ?

Fran. Have I seen it ? What a question ! Only look yourself. Where are my pinks and tulips ?

Pris. Where ? you have not then been at the terrace, under my mother's bow window ?

Fran. Is there any garden there ?

Anne. Ay, surely ; and a very pretty one.

Pris. Your garden here was far too little : so mother had one marked out for all of us, behind the terrace, six times larger.

Fran. And who owns it ? Doubtless your two favorites !

Pri. No ; it belongs to all of us, each has a portion.

Anne. I, as well as the rest.

Fran. And is there one for me ?

Pris. Undoubtedly ; and you are luckier than we. You have not taken any labor in the cultivation of your part, which, notwithstanding, you will find quite full of flowers.

Anne. Red, yellow, blue, and white, you will see.

Fran. Who set them for me ?

Anne. Your brothers. They have been a month about it, employing all their leisure hours upon the work. They have selected all the flowers that ~~their~~ beds supplied, and put them into yours, that, at the time of your return, you might be more surprised.

Fran. And have they done all this for me ? Daniel told me that they had taken all my flowers away, but did not tell me why.

Pris. If you give ear to Daniel, you will be worse off for it. He wished to make us quarrel with our brothers. How ungrateful ! Their mother

consents to have him stay for no other reason than because our mother begged father upon her death-bed, not to turn him off; and all his study is, to make her children unhappy.

Anne. And all because mother wishes to have him work, instead of spending half the day with idle fellows at the alehouse.

Fran. Is it so? Then I begin to see that he wanted to deceive me, when he promised to be my friend.

Pris. However, we must not say any thing about it to father; he would dismiss him; we must therefore carefully keep silence, and not ruin Daniel.

Fran. O no, indeed! since poor mother had such a value for him.

Pris. You will soon see whether he told you truth.

Anne. But come now, and look at your garden.

Fran. Yes, with all my heart; I long to see it.

[*Anne and Priscilla take him by the hand, and go out on one side, without perceiving Charles, who comes in with Percival on the other side.*]

SCENE IV. *Charles, Percival.*

They enter with two plates of cake and fruit, which they place upon the table in the summer-house.

Cha. Where is he?

Per. [*looking every way.*] Look, there he is—
There, brother, with his sisters, going to our garden.

Cha. I am glad of that; for only think what pleasure he will have when he discerns how busy we have been to ornament his portion of it!

Per. Do you think so? For my part, I think he

will find fault with every thing about him, he is so queer ! The flowers, he will say, are badly chosen, or the box not planted as it should be, or the ground too moist, or too dry, and twenty other things.

Cha. Yes ; but do you know that I am beginning to consider you as touchy as you think him ? I never saw you so before.

Per. It is he that caused it. Have his sisters ever had occasion to complain of my behavior ? And I only wish to live upon good terms with him. You know with what impatience I expected his arrival here, and how I ran with open arms to meet him.

Cha. True ; but, as I said before, it is very likely something grieves him. He is afraid perhaps that his father will no longer love him, or our mother show *him* less affection than he fancies she does us. If so, then surely it is our duty to make much of him in his uneasiness, and win him to be friends with us, by every gentle method in our power.

Per. You are in the right ; I did not think of that.

Cha. If he be as good as every body says, think, brother, how a little kindness on our part will, in the end, affect him ; how his father will be fonder of us for it ; and what pleasure we shall give mother !

Per. I was in the wrong, I own ; let him come, and I will be so attentive to him, he must unavoidably forget the past.

Cha. What hinders us from running to him where he is ? The flowers, that we planted for him, will make peace between us.

Per. That is well said : we will go immediately. But here he comes himself.

Cha. And see how pleased he seems !

Enter Francis, Priscilla, and Anne.

Fran. [running to embrace his brothers.] My dear good friends, my brothers, you must certainly be very much displeased with my behavior.

Cha. We ! why so ?

Per. It is over, my dear Frank, and I love you.

Fran. What a pretty garden you have made me ! You have given me all your finest flowers, without my having done any thing to give you pleasure.

Cha. It is enough for us, if you are pleased with our endeavors.

Fran. If I am ! Forgive me pray, dear brothers. I insulted you : I turned away when you came running to embrace me. I will never do so for the future. We will always be good friends ; and every thing that I have shall be yours as well as mine.

Cha. Yes, and every thing shall be in common to us ; not our pleasures only, but our sorrows also.

Per. Let us then embrace each other, and begin this friendship. [*They embrace.*]

Cha. This is as it should be ; and now, Frank, we must enjoy a little banquet which has been prepared for us by mother ; we have brought it and put it here in the summerhouse, as you may see. Let us enter. Come in, sisters, and sit down with us.

Per. It is your privilege, dear brother, to do the honors of the feast. Mother will have it so ; as you, she says, by your arrival, are the founder of it.

Fran. O, I am sure I never could have eaten any where with better appetite, than at this feast of friendship. [*He presents them with the cake and fruit.*]

Per. Well said, and is not this much better than to quarrel with each other ?

Anne. I believe so, truly ! For what quarrel can be worth these pears ?

Cha. How glad mother will be to find us such friends !

Pris. She deserves that we should give her all the joy possible. When you come to know her — But I remember, you have seen her.

Fran. Yes, Priscilla ; she received me with the greatest kindness, and has so agreeable a countenance that she cannot be ill-tempered. I perceived even by her tone of voice that I should be easily induced to love her.

Pris. And how good she is to us !

Anne. We need but please ourselves, to give her pleasure.

Pris. We were greatly to be pitied at the death of our mother. Father, who is employed all day in business, could not attend to us. There was forever something wrong in our clothes, and our education was much more neglected.

Anne. We should very probably have fallen into a habit of indolence.

Pris. But since our new mother came, we are both set to rights. She gives us every amusement suited to our age, and is a party with us in our

little pleasures. One would think her much more interested in the preservation of our health, than of her own. She makes such provision beforehand for our wants, that I have not yet had sufficient time to remark that I needed any thing !

Anne. Lately I was ill ; O, very ill indeed ; and it was she who waited on me. She was always by my bed, and doing every thing to comfort me. She made all manner of nice things ; and I believe, I should have died, but for her great attention to me.

Fran. O my dear sisters ! is this possible ?

Pris. You know too, brother, that, before you left us, we had not been accustomed to employ our needle. Well ; mother was kind enough to teach us. So that we now know,—not only plain, but every sort of fine work.

Cha. See here, the collar and wristbands of my shirt. Mother extols the work very much. Well, Priscilla did it all herself, and presented it to me.

Pris. Which you deserved beforehand ; for who made me such a garden, or presented me with such fine nosegays ? You must know, brother Francis, mother will not have us oblige our brothers, unless they likewise oblige us, and they do more to please us, than we could have thought to ask.

Ann. Yes ; and as a proof, I will show you the cork boat which Percival made with his penknife. You shall see its nice silk rigging, satin sails, and ribbon streamers. It swims charmingly in the fish-pond.

Per. Since you made me such a handsome pair of braces——

An. I can make much handsomer things than braces now. Ah, Frank, if you were to see a certain green and lilach striped silk purse. The green at least is all of my own fancying; ask Priscilla. O; I am sure you will be delighted when you have it.

Fran. How! have you made me a purse?

[Priscilla makes a sign that Anne should be silent.]

Anne. [*embarrassed.*] O, Frank, I forgot—[*in a whisper*] yes, it is! but you must know, mother enjoined me not to tell you. And besides, she means to surprise you herself with nothing less than a nice worked waistcoat, such as my brothers have on—O, you will soon see!

Pri. This little giddy creature can keep no secret.

Anne. No, because there was so much pleasure in revealing. We have been always thinking of you, brother.

Fran. O, I thank you; but pray tell me, are you really happy?

Pri. Are we happy? What is wanting in our situation? Our mother is really so good! I do not know how it is, but she has found the secret of converting every thing into a sort of pleasure. I have no amusement half so great as chatting with her. Even while she is jesting she instructs us.

Anne. You should see us, when we are reading certain little tales, which a friend of ours composes for us. He knows what every little boy and girl does in the world; and it would be comical if he were to put us in his book.

Pri. I wish he would put us in it, on account of

our mother ; that all the world might know the goodness of her heart, and how we love her.

Cha. Yes, and I too, for the sake of our father, who treats us just as if we were his real children.

Enter Mr. Floyd.

Mr. F. [*who had stood by the side of the summer-house during the whole preceding scene, shows himself suddenly amongst them.*] Yes, and you are so within my heart. I make it my happiness to think that I am your father. But where is Frank ?

Fran. [*embracing Mr. Floyd.*] Here, father. O how rejoiced am I to see you, dear father.

Mr. F. Kiss me once more, my dear child. And now let me inquire, if you are pleased with your new brothers ?

Fran. O, I never could have chosen better. I will love them, and do every thing in my power that they may love me likewise.

Cha. There will be no difficulty in that matter, since we are determined to love you.

Per. We shall only need to recollect the pleasure we have this day received.

Pris. In order that you may keep your promise I will be sure frequently to remind you of it.

Ann. O, as to that, sister, I am sure I shall remember it without a monitor.

Mr. F. I certainly believe you will do so, from what I have heard you say ; for, to tell you a secret, dear children, I was standing here hard by, during your conversation ; and I am sure I shall never forget it : nor I alone, but another ; for your

mother has heard every thing as well as myself. Come, dear wife, approach, and enjoy a pleasure so congenial with your goodness.

SCENE V. *Mr. and Mrs. Floyd, Francis, Priscilla, Anne, Charles, Percival.*

Mr. F. Here she is, my little ones ; the partner that I have chosen to promote your happiness ; and not yours only, but my own. The fortune, which it might have been in my power to leave to you, would be nothing, in comparison with that more valuable gift, a good and proper education. We have therefore made these second nuptials to procure you every possible advantage. Three among you needed a mother, who might take upon her the care of your childhood ; and the other two, a father to advance them in the world. Your interests were the same, in these second nuptials ; and it is for the benefit of all of us that they have been framed. Promise me then, dear wife, as I on my part promise, that you will never think of treating either of these children with the least degree of partiality, except indeed as a reward which any one may merit for superior good behavior.

Mrs. F. My reply to you, dear husband, are these tears ; I cannot repress them ; and to you, my children, these embraces.

[She holds out her arms, and all the children strive with each other to get near her.]

Mr. F. And do you, dear little ones, on your part, promise to keep up a constant union with

each other ; to avoid all jealousies and quarrels ; and, like children of one parent, love and respect each other.

[The children take each other by the hand, and, kneeling, answer,]

Yes, father ; we do, we do.

Mr. F. [*raising them from the ground.*] Continue to live in this state of friendship. You will find its charms constantly increase, and the tie between you grow closer every day. You will be as happy, from the services that you do each other, as from those little sacrifices that may frequently be necessary for the sake of peace among you. Every one, enjoying individual happiness, will not the less enjoy the happiness of his brother or sister ; which, in fact, every one may attribute to their own generous concession or forbearance. There will not be a person around you who will not interest himself in your prosperity, if his friendship or good will be worth the acquisition ; and your future children will reward you by *their* tenderness, for having so well merited the affection of your parents.

THE POOR OFFICER.

A DRAMA, IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS.

CAPTAIN BARTON.

MRS. BARTON.

EDWARD,

PAUL,

THEODORE, *their Sons.*

LUCRETIA,

ISABEL, *their Daughters.*

MASTER OF THE ACADEMY.

EUGENIUS, *his Son.*

PIPES, *an old Sergeant.*

SCENE, *an apartment of Captain Barton's House.*

SCENE I.

Paul, Theodore, Lucretia, Isabel, Pipes.

Lucretia and Isabel are employed ; the one in reading, and the other at her tambour frame. Theodore has a pencil, and is drawing. Paul shoulders Pipes' crutch.

Pipes to Paul.

 WAKE ready !—Present !—Fire !—Come ; very well. Another lesson will complete you. Give me back my crutch. [*To Lucretia and Isabel.*] You will not let me teach you then ?

Luc. Teach us ?



Isa. Young ladies ?

Pipes. And why not ? A soldier's children should all learn their exercise. One never looks so well as with a musket.

Luc. Especially when it is represented by a crutch.

Pipes. True ; but I mistake it frequently myself, miss ; and incline to put it *over* rather than *under* my shoulder. It is, in truth, a sort of instinct in me ; a sort of first motion. Ah, poor Pipes ! to have a crutch, instead of a gun in his hand. Ten years have I carried it about, and am not yet used to it.

Paul. But recollect, Pipes ! at your age you would certainly have been otherwise dismissed.

Pipes. Dismissed ! what mean you, master Paul ? Had it not been for my wooden leg, I should have died a soldier. Confounded leg ! a hundred times a day I find myself disposed to make a bonfire of it ! Instead of a fine white spatterdash, when I see nothing but a wooden stump, I hardly know myself, and fall into passion.

Theo. Would you wish to have it otherwise ? Why, man, it is nothing but the fortune of war.

Isa. And is it thus that Theodore comforts you ! Do not be afflicted, Pipes.

Pipes. You are in the right, my dear miss Isabel ; for, after all, it bears me witness I have seen hot service. If my leg had not been in the fire, it would hardly be so dry now. In fact, I know some legs that are in their place, because they carried their owners out of danger ; and I would not exchange my wooden leg for twenty such. Young gentlemen, it is happy for you both that you are to serve ; but take my counsel, and lose arms as well as legs, rather than get the least spot in your honor for want of courage.

Theo. Yes, I promise you I will.

Paul. And so will I. When I am fighting, I will always think of you.

Pipes. Do, master Paul ; and your brave father too. *Barton and Pipes* shall be your charging words. With these two names between your lips, you will always be the first to do your duty.

Enter Captain Barton.

The Children [seeing Capt. B. run towards him, and cry all at once] Here is father !

Capt. B. [embracing them.] Good morning to you all, my dears ! Good-morning to you, Pipes, *[holding out his hand,]* and thank you heartily for your instructions to my children.

Pipes. Ah, sir, my instructions I bestow upon them with a great deal of pleasure when you are not by ; but, seeing you, I am almost sorry.

Capt. B. And why so, my friend ?

Pi. Because I see its fruits, by your example. If I am wise then, shall I study to make soldiers of your children, that they may be dismissed, after they are worn out in the service ?

Capt. B. But why call my bad fortune to remembrance, when I myself have labored to forget it, and complain no longer of what you suppose hard usage ?

Pipes. Please your honor then, I will complain for both. Bombs and cannon ! is it not a shame ! What, turn me off for having one leg less ? A soldier is always fit for duty, if his heart and his head are left him. If they think that we cripples make no show at a review, why let them keep us for a battle ; we will be put into a corps apart ; we will not even condescend to mix with others. No affront to your grenadiers nor your light infantry, we will be first of all, I warrant you, sir,

Capt. B. Good old friend ! how much am I pleased to find this fire of youth and courage still burning within you.

Pipes. I am quite vexed to see you smile, who should storm more than I do. I am a vulgar dog ; I am nobody ; and they may think they ought to overlook me, having lost a limb ; but *you*, a captain, who have had wounds in twenty battles, and have such a family of children, to put you on what they call half-pay, and send you off without a pension ! who can think of such treatment and be patient !

Capt. B. I find no fault. There are others more unhappy. [*He turns to his children, who seem uneasy.*] My good children, you have done enough to require some recreation this morning. Go, then ; but first visit your mother ; she is in her chamber.

Children. Yes, father ; and afterwards we will come back to study. [*Exeunt.*]

Capt. B. My old friend, I am pleased with your affection ; but still I do not like that you should speak before my children as you do. I would not have them think themselves authorized to hate their fellow-creatures ; such a notion would discourage them in their pursuit of fortune. Remember, they are destined to acquire themselves a reputation by their actions. It is unlikely that they would take pains for such a purpose, if they are told that men merit only their contempt.

Pipes [*ironically.*] Yes ; your honor has great reason to defend mankind, they have respected you so much !

Capt. B. There are more good than wicked men about us ; and, if there were only you, that thought would reconcile me to humanity !

Pipes [*bowing.*] O, captain !

Capt. B. You have been so willing to attach yourself to my ill fortune ! besides, you know, I am indebted to you for the preservation of my life.

Pipes. And, if I saved it, I was under obligation to do no less, my worthy captain, for your sending me so often to the drill. Had it not been for you, Pipes would have turned out a vagabond and drunkard, like many others. It was your kindness that made a man of me ; I should have been, my whole life long, a common soldier, had you permitted. I have been promoted from rank to rank, and at last made sergeant ; and that is something, every one will grant me ! and no inconsiderable lift towards colonel. But a plague upon the musket-ball, say I, that, to my heart of oak, has added this pine leg !

Capt. B. Come, Pipes, now you have repose, and that is always as good as honor.

Pipes. I shall never have repose whilst I see you ill at ease. The produce of your farm, this year, has failed, and I am now a burden to you.

Capt. B. Can a child become a burden to his father ? And pray, are you not as one among my children ? Thanks to heaven ! I shall be always sure of a subsistence. If our ration is a little less, there shall still be an equal share for you, Pipes.

Pipes. And I take it ; but have hopes that I shall be able to acknowledge all your favors handsomely, as I have met with an employment.

Capt. B. So much the better, Pipes ! I am glad to hear it, for *your* sake. What is it ?

Pipes. Could you have supposed what I am now going to tell you ? But it is true, sir, that a hosier offered me, the other day, employment in his shop, if I would knit stockings.

Capt. B. Very good ; at least, you will not be idle if you accept it.

Pipes. How, sir, very good ? I could have knocked the fellow down, but that my crutch had tumbled on the ground.

Capt. H. I hope this knocking people down is not the employment that you have chosen ?

Pipes. It would be better far than what the hosier meant to give me. A fine sight indeed ! Pipes knitting like a woman ! I would see his stock of knitting-needles at Jericho first ; and yet, this circumstance made me think a little. I can work, it is true, said I to myself ; so I went to Mr. Wilkinson, and told him I would furbish up his old sword-blades, if he would only employ an ancient soldier. He consented ; so that I shall still have the handling of warlike weapons, and receive besides a shilling a day. Let me beg, captain, that you will accept it for my maintenance.

Capt. B. No, my friend ; keep what you earn. You have other calls for money ; and for my part, I want nothing.

Pipes. Nothing ! when you almost live on bread and water ? Nay now, captain, you are far too proud, believe me ; and refuse a shilling for no other reason than because I am not your equal ! A vengeance

on this wooden leg of mine, that has prevented me from being a colonel, for what any one can tell !

Capt. B. You do not know me yet, I see, my friend ; for, were I to accept a gift from any one, it should be only from the king and you.

Pi. What, the king and I together ! and in a breath ?

Capt. B. My king is only my master. In my friend, I see a sort of god ; and you, Pipes, are the only friend that is left me.

Pipes. Then, my friend—captain, take my shilling.

Capt. B. I have already told you, I could put it to no use, and did not misinform you ; but, on second thoughts, a time may come, when I shall need a great deal more. Lay by as much as you can save of this daily shilling, that, whenever I may want your savings, you may then assist me.

Pipes. I understand you. It is for my sake, rather than your own, that you counsel me to act thus savingly. No matter ; I will pursue your counsel literally, and my money shall be sacred. It shall go in nothing but tobacco ; and I will take care how I get into a passion, that I may not break my pipe.

Capt. B. I praise your resolution ; but go at present and smoke one to the honor of our friendship. Mrs. Barton, I observe, is coming ; and I wish to have a little conversation with her by myself.

Pipes. Yes, I will leave you ; a little walk will be of service to me. Your discourse has had an effect on my spirits. I shall quickly be composed again. [Exit.]

SCENE II. *Captain Barton, Mrs. Barton.*

Mrs. B. What has happened, my dear ? You sent the children to me ; and I thought I saw upon their countenances something not quite natural to them. I conceived it not so proper to ask *them* the reason, but came to know the whole from you. Hide nothing from me, I beseech you ! Has any new misfortune happened that I may lighten by commiseration or consolation ?

Capt. B. No, my dear ! With your assistance, I can bear all sorrows ; and, if unforeseen affliction were to come upon me, after the experience I have had of your philosophy and fortitude, I would not hesitate to tell you of it. But be of comfort ! nothing fatal nor unfortunate has happened.

Mrs. B. What then could occasion the uneasiness which I noticed in their countenances ?

Capt. B. Our old soldier caused it, whose excess of zeal and friendship for me carried him so far, while they were present, as to vent complaints concerning the injustice of my lot. I observed that they were affected by the strength of his expressions ; and, as I thought such invectives might inspire discouragement, I sent them to you ; in order that Pipes' murmurs, being followed instantly by your caresses, might not make a wrong impression.

Mrs. B. Poor things ! they know not what sad misfortunes they are to experience upon earth !

Capt. B. I hope their fortune will not be so lamentable as you anticipate ; for hitherto, at least, they have had no great cause to complain.

Mrs. B. What, my dear, when they are utterly deprived of all the advantages which they might reasonably have expected in life ?

Capt. B. They never knew them ; therefore never can the want of those advantages afflict them. Possibly they might have only served to soften and unnerve their strength, as well as understanding. The hard life, to which they have been used, has given them a robust and sound constitution, and an energy of mind. Instead of pursuing frivolous or puerile amusements, they know already how to convert their labor into pleasure. If God's providence should grant them any of the gifts of fortune, they will then yield the more enjoyment ; but, supposing they are all decreed to pass their days in the privation of this life's conveniences, they will have learnt to undergo their fortune without murmur or complaint. Shall I tell you what I think, my dear ? I do not look on the condition to which we are destined, as so very lamentable ; for, surrounded by the pleasures of the world, should we have known those tender sentiments for each other, which we certainly have learnt, in what men call the school of adversity ? Hurried on by pleasure, we should each have gone in quest of friends who would have left us in adversity, and perhaps have aggravated our afflictions by their treachery ; while now, unfortunate as we are, we have it in our power to make each other happy, by our mutual friendship. There are many miserable individuals in the world, who are even destitute of

bread to eat ; we have never experienced such want, nor stooped to procure it by dishonor. If, as is the case, we are under the necessity of living upon what may certainly be called a very common diet, in order that our children may not want education—we enjoy, on the other hand, their gratitude, and witness their improvement in knowledge. We are conscious that we have not neglected one tittle of our duty towards them. Every generous notion that they possess is our work ; it is our lessons and example which enables them to possess it. They will do no laudable or virtuous action in their future lives except what an honest pride will permit us to attribute to ourselves ; and, if any among them should be raised to distinction by his merit, I am confident he will not leave us in our old age, when we may more particularly want succor.

Mrs. B. O, my dear husband, how does your fortitude sustain me !

Capt. B. On the contrary, dear wife, it is your constancy that upholds my fortitude. Without support, I should have long since sunk beneath the burden of my sorrows ; but, seeing you renounce the delicacy, and subdue the weakness inseparable from your sex, that you might properly discharge your duty, how could I seem less firm than you were, and not blush at being called a man ?

Mrs. B. Ascribe not so much honor to me for any sacrifices that I have made. They must be nothing, compared with a mother's wishes ; and I

would make still greater, if, on such conditions, I might have the prospect of happier fortune to beset my children. But, my dear, have you renounced all thoughts of soliciting your friends? Are you without hope that such solicitations would be attended with success?

Capt. B. You know the issue of my former applications. If I then experienced nothing but denials, when more recent services spoke for me, shall I hope a better fortune now? and if the hollow-hearted friend, who deceived me, would not at that time second my just expectations with his influence, who will now espouse the application of a man so many years forgotten? My very silence since that period would be urged as a pretext for new refusals; and fresh disappointments would only re-open wounds as yet not quite healed. I have thrown away almost my whole dependence to procure me nothing but vexation; I shall therefore hardly be so rash, as to consume what is left me in such steps as, if unsuccessful, would end in desperation.

Mrs. B. Desperation?

Capt. B. Yes; even if they should cost me nothing but the time which I must purloin from the instruction of my children. If I durst have any hopes, and should again be disappointed, I am convinced I could not survive; or should at least drag out the wretched remnant of my life in sorrow. No, dear wife; let us not imitate those parents, who imagine they have done enough, in yielding some small portion of their superfluities, and that too with reluc-

tance, in order that their children may obtain an education. Let us prove our love, by dedicating even our necessities to their wants. Let us consent to live on bread, if such a sacrifice be needful, that in future they may show themselves to have been educated in a manner worthy of their parents.

Mrs. B. And I trust in heaven they will do so : for surely we have not given life to monsters.

Capt. B. I have already such a hope concerning Edward. Child though he be, I have frequently remarked his depth of understanding, openness of temper, and ingenuous way of thinking ; qualities that I would desire to find in my friend. He will have two motives for seeking advancement, and those such as operate very forcibly on noble minds : He will have obstacles to overcome, and thereby so much the more glory to acquire. With what ardor have I observed him, particularly these two years past, resign himself entirely to study, and digest the greatest difficulties ! With what enthusiasm has he seized at the recital of some glorious action ! I have often noted him retiring in thought, that he might narrowly examine the transactions both of Rome and Sparta, and observe the infancy of the most celebrated heroes. In a search like this, no wonder that the achievements of a Cyrus should inflame his nature to resemble him in temperance, fortitude, and reputation. I believe that nothing but some happy circumstance is wanting to proclaim him already, what he may one day become.

Enter Paul, Theodore, Lucretia, Isabel.

Paul. You were speaking, father, about Edward.

Capt. B. True, Paul, I was so. You are sensible, there is scarcely a moment of the day, in which I do not think of one or another of you.

Isa. Have you had a letter from him ?

Capt. B. Not to-day ! but then I know him, my child, so well, that I can tell, at any time, what he is about, without his writing to me. For example ; I am sure that, at this very moment, he is thinking to afford me a proof of his affection, by a diligent attention to his studies. I am sure, Paul, that his good behavior will be serviceable to your introduction, when the time comes that you must go to school, and have the same instructor.

Paul. And, as I am to go before Theodore, I will do every thing in my power to introduce him likewise with the same degree of credit.

Capt. B. I was sure that you would make me such a promise. In your situation, my dear little fellows, destitute, as you are sensible you are, of wealth and patrons, your advancement in the world must be at first entirely owing to yourselves, you must be your own patrons, since it depends, at all times, upon the efforts you make to excel each other. In truth, the elevation of all three may be the happy consequence of good behavior in one only : as the bad behavior of one only may involve the other two, and be a bar to their good fortune. So that you may see, on one hand, what disgrace, and,

on the other, what honor, may be expected from the turn of your conduct.

Paul. But, father, you know, we heard Pipes say just now, that you had not been recompensed for your services !

Theo. I am sure, however, you were never found deficient in your duty.

Isa. So pray tell us why the king has for so many years forgotten you ?

Capt.B. Possibly because there have been many to reward, more worthy than myself ; or because the expenses of government prevent his generosity. I have besides neglected, for a long time, all applications to his justice, in order that I might be better employed upon your education. But, when you enter into public life, you will be able, by proper conduct, to turn his royal eye upon your father ; and if so, I shall doubly enjoy his benefits.

Paul. O, if it depend upon my conduct——

The. What ! and shall we then be able to repay you every thing that you have done on our account ?

Capt.B. Yes ; and to the full. I will not raise the value of those sacrifices which your good mother and myself have made to your instruction. We have constantly submitted to them unrepiningly, and even with the greatest pleasure. Providence already recompenses us, by planting in your hearts the promise of those virtues which will gratify our hopes. But, if you were in future to deceive us, and conduct yourselves in such a manner that the fruit of all our sacrifices would be lost, what then would

be the dismal consequences ? your poor sisters brought to poverty ! your mother in despair ! and my grey hairs descending with sorrow to the grave !

Paul. No ; it shall never be so.

Theo. Be assured, if you love us, we shall do every thing in our power to make you happy.

Capt. B. My existence totally depends upon you ; and through you I am to live or die.

Paul. In that case, you will live while we have a single drop of blood within us.

Theo. We will rather die a thousand times, than willingly dishonor you.

Capt. B. I receive this assurance, my children, in the sight of heaven, and can have nothing else to wish. I shall be indebted to you for the greatest happiness that is to be enjoyed in this world.

Luc. O, how badly off are we, father, who cannot, by our public conduct make you happy !

Capt. B. You may make my happiness still greater, by so acting in this retirement as to occasion me the tranquil and permanent joys peculiar to a father. What will there be wanting to my happiness, if, whilst your brothers honor my old age by their laudable actions, you, together with your sister, comfort our fireside with your attention, and adorn it with your virtues ? What additional felicity can I entreat of heaven, if I live to see you merit the distinction gained you by the fame and glory of your brothers ? [*He takes Mrs. Barton by the hand.*] Dear wife ! can you imagine what would be our transports at so fair a prospect, when both joy and

honor, caused by each of those to whom we have given birth, should fill our dwelling !

Paul. You say nothing, dear mother !

Luc. You weep !

Mrs. B. It is for joy, my children. I was indulging myself in the happiness which your father has just described.

Paul. We promise that we will do our utmost not to disappoint you. And as for Edward, I will answer for him just as he himself would, were he present. [*Mrs. B. affectionately embraces them.*]

Enter Pipes, rushing in.

Pipes. O my worthy captain !

Capt. B. What is the matter ?

Pipes. I have seen him—he has returned ?

Capt. B. Returned ?—who, Pipes ?

Pipes. He, sir ; my best friend ! the only friend I have ! except your honor !

Capt. B. Do you mean Edward ?

Mrs. B. My son ?

Paul. My brother ?

Luc. and Isa. Where—where is he ?

Theo. O my dearest Pipes, is Edward coming ?

Pipes. Do you ask me, when I have told you ? Why, he almost upset me, throwing his arms about my neck. The excellent young man ! still the same ! He is coming after me. I hear him on the stairs.

Mrs. B. Why does he return ? O heaven ! he has been only ten days absent ! Can it be, that——

Capt. B. What, suspect Edward ! This is the first reason for displeasure you have ever caused me !

Mrs. B. Pardon my uneasiness ! Yet what are we to think on this occasion ?

Capt. B. Any thing, or every thing, rather than imagine he has done amiss.

Enter Edward.

Edw. [*springing to his father.*] My dear, dear father ! how rejoiced I am to see you !

Capt. B. My dear Edward ! What can be the reason of your coming back so unexpectedly ?

Edw. It is explained in this letter. Read ! [*He gives a paper and runs to his mother.*] My dear mother ! you will be very happy ! [*He returns to his brothers and sisters, and salutes them.*] How are you, dearest Isabel, and Lucretia ? and you, Paul and Theodore ? You were far from expecting to see me so soon, were you not ? You will however be glad of my return, when you know the reason of it.

Isa. We are glad already, without knowing it.

Edw. I had yesterday drawn up a letter for my father, with good news in it, and the hopes of much better ; but my master, being on the point of setting out for London, on the subject of that better news, thought proper to detain the letter ; and, succeeding in the object of his journey, it was instantly determined that I should come myself this morning.

Capt. B. [*reading.*] What is this ! The king allows me a pension of three hundred pounds a year !

Mrs. B. Can it be ?

Pipes. Bombs and cannon ! if it were only true !

All the Children. How, how, father ?

Capt. B. Read the whole yourself, dear wife,

And who is the generous man who has thus condescended to enumerate my services in presence of the king, when every one beside had abandoned me ? The king then knows that I have not served him without some degree of honor ! O my prince ! I could certainly have been happy, though deprived of your munificence, but not of your esteem. Dear Edward ! who has been my benefactor ?

SCENE THE LAST. *Edward runs out hastily and soon returns with the Master of the Military School and Eugenius.*

Edw. Here is our friend, and second father. See here too, my brother Eugenius. A new son for you and mother.

Mas. Pardon me, sir, that I have been so free as to intrude upon you without leave ; I was not willing, I confess, to lose the affecting scene to which I am now witness.

Capt. B. You may well expect the liberty of being witness to it, since it is all of your creation.

Mrs. B. And is further gratifying to the feelings of your benevolent heart.

Mas. I am indeed most happy, madam, to perform a character therein, although not the hero. It is to Edward, your son, that the honor of that character appertains.

Capt. B. To my son ?

Mas. You had deprived yourself of almost every comfort, that you might form his heart and understanding ; and on his part he deprived himself of his

enjoyments, to evince the gratitude he owed you. Pardon me, good sir, if I appear acquainted with the secrets of your family. Your son has not betrayed them. I read them in his bosom. Ever since he was with us, he would take no sustenance but bread and water. All our menaces did not procure an explanation of his motives for such abstinence; and by insinuation only did I finally know it. He resolved to be no happier than his father, who denied himself so many things on his account. We spoke about you, and I learned your situation. I caused intimation of it to be made to our good sovereign; but your name, it seems, was in his recollection; and he said, that he thought himself quite happy, in the means of recompensing as he did, your ancient services and the care you took in bestowing such an education upon your children as must render them the most valuable officers. The worthy nobleman, who mentioned you to the king, even told me, that, in saying these words, he shed tears.

Capt. B. O sir, forgive the weakness of nature. I had strength sufficient to endure misfortunes; but not half enough to endure such joy! My son! my dearest Edward! are you capable of such generous affection to your father?

Edw. Pardon me: I have but for a little time done in your behalf, what you have been doing for many years on my account. [*He turns towards his mother.*] My dear mother! do not grieve, I beseech you, now that you are rich.

Mas. Remember, I also mean to be your father.

Edw. O yes ; always ! So, father, embrace Eugenius my new brother ! we have vowed for ever to love each other.

Eug. Yes ; and I, on my side, never shall forget my promise.

Mas. I have been so free, sir, as to bring my son with me to your house, that he might contemplate the virtues that flourish here. He has read the heart of Edward many days before myself ; and he it was who first desired his friendship.

Capt. B. If you thus give him a friend, in the person of my son, I ought to find another for myself in the person of his father.

Mas. I can wish for nothing with greater ardor than such a title ; and, on my part, offer you my pledge of friendship. [*Holding out his hand.*]

Pipes. I can be no longer an indifferent looker-on ! [*he lets his crutch fall, and rushes in between them.*] Excuse me, sir ; but where my captain gives his heart, *mine* also must go with it. You are a generous man ! were you not, Pipes would never flatter you by calling you so.

Capt. B. Pardon, sir, the bluntness of a soldier ; he is full of honor, and this mark of his affection for me cannot be a matter of indifference to you. It has been my consolation under many sorrows.

Mas. Then I take his affection in good part. Your hand, comrade ; for soldiers are all brothers.

Pipes. O my other good supporter, where are you now ? But I will dance without you at the thought of such a happy day.

THE AFFECTIONATE MOTHER.

LETTER I.

TO MRS. TORRINGTON.

MADAM,



HIS address, perhaps, will cause you some surprise ; or possibly you may have looked for such a greeting. I find it necessary ; and of course, without preface, pass to the subject which extorts this letter from me.

You may remember, there was a time when I sincerely loved you, and when you appeared to merit my affection. That time is now past. You have found an object worthier of your love than I am ; and, since you act upon the idea of promoting your felicity by such a preference, I do not wish to thwart you. We are free. Do you retire where you think fit, while I live where I please ; and that is here. I grant you a week's time to make your choice. I go away to-morrow morning, and shall stay from home till Monday next, that you may not be incommoded with my presence, or endure that trouble, of which it does not suit me to be a witness.

Respecting our three children, you may be at peace on their account. Their mother, after her

behavior, must no longer have the least communication with them ; and whenever I think fit to make inquiry, I shall find some governess who is qualified to bring them up according to their station.

Receive for ever my adieu. Enjoy in peace your new condition, and endeavor, as much as possible, to blot out the remembrance of that man, who formerly was proud to subscribe himself your loving husband, but is now no more than, &c.

ARTHUR TORRINGTON.

LETTER II.

TO MR. TORRINGTON.

SIR,

I should in vain endeavor to describe the different emotions raised in my soul, by the perusal of your letter. You resolve that a separation shall take place between us. Since you judge an open rupture needful, I submit to your good pleasure. If, when we were first united, any one had told me that all our mutual vows would come to this, I should not have believed that such an event were possible. Yet it has taken place. In my misfortunes, however, I have one consolation left ; namely, that in heaven there is a God, who has the means of manifesting innocence. My conscience clears me of reproach. My heart has no object worthier of my regard, as you say, than you are. It has always been devoted to you only. I protest all this, not making use of oaths, but a simple affirmation, which my heart pronounces with assurance. I will

make no effort to convince you of my innocence and of your injustice. I shall patiently pursue the path which God's providence points out to me—God's providence, which has hitherto heaped its blessings upon me ; and, I hope, will still continue so to do.

It is a cruel step, sir, to take all my children from me. I must think, the mother, who first gave them birth, has a greater title to them than a father ; and the laws would grant me the society of one, at least : but do not imagine that I have such a doubt of your paternal tenderness and desire to make them happy as to have recourse to legal aid against you. I will with resignation imagine, that God's will has torn them from me by death, or that I am dead myself, and shall be very quickly followed by them.

Farewell, and be at all times happy, most unjust, yet dearest husband. Every night and morning I will pray God that, for your own repose, he may remove the mist of error from before your eyes, convincing you how faithful and affectionate a wife you are at present wronging, in the person of your desolate

AMELIA TORRINGTON.

SCENE I. *Mrs. Torrington, Harriet, Sophia, and Caroline.*

Har. Here we are, mother.

Mrs. T. Come hither, my dear children. Sit down by me ; I have something to tell you.

Car. Take me on your knee, pray do, mother.

[*Mrs. T. takes Caroline in her arms and weeps.*]

Har. What is the matter, dear mother ? why do you cry ?

Soph. I have done nothing, at least that I know of, to displease you.

Car. Nor I either, dear mother.

Children. [*while the mother cannot speak for tears.*] Mother ! dear, dear mother !

Mrs. T. Do not be uneasy, my sweet children, I beseech you. Do not cry thus, or you will distract me.

Har. Then why did you first cry yourself ? Why did you weep so yesterday ? the day before ? and every day since you received my father's last letter ?

Mrs. T. Do not ask me, my poor girl ! You will know soon enough. All that I can tell you at present, my dear children, is, that I am forced to leave you to-morrow morning early.

Soph. And do you not intend to take me this time, as I was promised ? Harriet, you remember, went with you last year.

Mrs. T. I wish I could, my life ; and not you only, but your sisters also ; it is not, however, in my power.

Har. At least, mother, I hope you mean to return very soon.

Soph. And will you bring me something pretty ?

Car. And me too ?

Har. What, sisters ! can you see how sad mother is, and yet ask her for playthings ? If I durst——

Mrs. T. Well ? what, my dearest Harriet ?

Har. You will never come back to us. I know it. You are always sorrowful when you quit us ;

but you never wept so much as now, when you were going on a little journey.

Mrs. T. Do not alarm yourself, Harriet. In about six weeks I shall come back and see you.

Soph. - In about six weeks ! and what are we to do, so long, without you ?

Car. I can never play so well, you know, mother, as when you are with me.

Mrs. T. Your father will come back next Monday.

Har. And not find you here to receive him !

Soph. He will be very sorry to find you absent.

Car. So pray stay at least till he comes back.

Mrs. T. It will give him greater pleasure, at my return, to see me ; and six weeks will soon be past.

Har. You will not inform us ; but I know very well that father——

Mrs. T. Dear child, you wound my heart ; and I have grieved enough already, at the thought of parting with you. Pray be comforted. We shall see each other again very soon. Receive this kiss as an assurance.

Har. [*clinging round her neck.*] O, if it were true !

Mrs. T. When six weeks are past, you will see. I promise ; and you know I never deceived you. Take care of your health, dear girls, and study to amuse yourselves till I return. [*she embraces them.*] Harriet and Sophia, you that are the eldest, take what care you can that nothing happens to poor little Caroline. Think frequently of me, and I will do so of you. Farewell, farewell ! [*She forces herself from them, and goes out.*]



LETTER III.

TO MRS. VILLARS.

DEAR AND WORTHY FRIEND,

I send you my three girls, and earnestly conjure you to bestow your tenderest care upon them, so that they may find a second mother in you. After the deplorable event which has deprived them of the mother who first gave them life, I look upon it as a special blessing that you so generously condescend to superintend their education. I am sensible

how great a burden I wish you to assume, and how utterly unable I shall ever be to show my gratitude for such a favor. But what will not a father dare for his children ? Condescend therefore, my dearest madam, for this reason, to pardon any paternal rashness, or want of consideration, and dispose for ever both of me and every thing belonging to me.

There is one particular which I cannot sufficiently press upon your attention ; namely, the selection of a proper governess. Endeavor to secure one who accords with your principles and mine. There are few, madam, fit for any thing but dressing and undressing dolls ! and rather than deliver up my children to such creatures, I would leave them in a wilderness, to vegetate, without receiving any education. But, as souls which afterwards prove worthy of each other have a sort of reciprocal attraction, by a secret sympathy subsisting between them, I am not without the hope that, in so elegant a place as Bath, you will at least be able to procure some lady of irreproachable character, with sense and knowledge sufficient to educate my children as I wish. I beg that you will consider yourself at liberty to enter into any terms with such a one as you think proper, since I mean to spare no cost upon a point of such importance.

I am quite impatient for a letter from you. It would highly please me, if you would charge my eldest daughter Harriet with some part of the correspondence that will pass between us ; as by such means, she will early learn to write correctly, and

to express herself with ease. It is in your power to render the great misfortune I have undergone more supportable, and to give me in my children all the joy of which their mother has deprived me. In reality, I cherish such a hope, to drive away the misery that otherwise would overwhelm me ; and subscribe myself, with every sentiment of gratitude, esteem, and friendship,

Yours, &c.

ARTHUR TORRINGTON.

SCENE II. *Mrs. Torrington, Jenny the maid, and Crape her footman.*

Crape. [entering.] Here is my lady Harbord's answer to your letter, madam, with her compliments.

Mrs. T. That is well. Is Benjamin in the house ? Bid him come up : and come you with him. [*Having read the letter.*] Thank heaven, I have succeeded ! [*To her maid.*] Hold, Jenny : it is meant for you.

Jen. [reading.] " I am quite happy, madam, to receive the chambermaid you recommend. One, of whom you speak so well, must be a valuable servant ; and I thank you for the preference that you have given me on this occasion. She may come whenever she thinks fit." [*Giving back the letter with a trembling hand.*] Alas, my dear mistress, what have I done, that you send me away ? In what have I deserved dismissal ?

Mrs. T. You have not deserved it, Jenny. You have, at all times, been a dutiful girl ; and if, hereafter, Providence should otherwise dispose my lot, I

will have none but you to wait upon me. But at present, it is impossible that you should longer continue with me. We must absolutely part. Be comforted ; it will not be long, I persuade myself, before I came back. I would, till then, have given you wherewithal to live, but that I feared the danger that might threaten your youth and inexperience. You will be, with lady Harwood, no less happy than you were with me, and I have recommended you to her protection in a very earnest manner. Take this little present as a token of remembrance. There is too, in the bottom drawer of my bureau, a quantity of clothes and linen, which I give you. Go, Jenny, and do not grieve thus. My eyes have enough of tears already. Go ; and, when you have put all your things together, I will see you once more.

Jen. And must I quit you, my dearest lady ? I cannot leave you ; let me follow you wherever you are going.

Mrs. T. Let me beg, dear Jenny, if you love me, not to increase my sufferings at present with your lamentations ; leave me to myself. I wish to be alone. I have already mentioned that I will see you once again before we part.

Jen. [*going out.*] My worthy mistress !

Enter Benjamin, the coachman, and Crape, the footman.

Benj. Do you want me, madam ? Are you going out this morning ?

Mrs. T. Wait a little, Benjamin.—Crape, how much is owing to you ?

Crape. Only a quarter, madam.

Mrs. T. There it is, besides a half year more ; that you may have a trifle for your subsistence till you find another place, as my affairs will oblige me to leave home. I have been pleased with your behavior in my service, and have drawn up this character, which you may show wherever you may seek for employment. You are young and know your business, and will easily procure a place. Farewell, and God be with you.

[The footman sorrowfully leaves the room.]

Benj. I would fain believe, madam, that my turn is not coming ?

Mrs. T. It is with great reluctance I inform you that we must part.

Benj. What, must I leave you, madam ? I, that saw you almost as soon as you were born, and followed you, when you were married, from your father's house ! I whom you considered a part of your dowry, and declared that you did so ; will you send me away, when I have been so many years your servant ? Do you think me less attached to you at present on account of my age, than I was formerly ? Alas ! I have no wife nor child. I have no friend but you, my dearest mistress ! what will become of me, if I must now be parted from you ?

Mrs. T. Benjamin, you may easily believe me, when I tell you, this parting cannot but afflict me. But I have dismissed my maid and footman, and you may judge, I cannot have occasion for a coachman.

Benj. Cannot have occasion, my lady ! Are

my master's affairs in confusion then ? I have wherewithal to feed your horses many years to come—your bounty gave it me. Pray then let me die in my seat, and still continue with you.

Mrs. T. This proof of your attachment is gratifying, and I feel it at my heart ; but be comforted. Your master manages his fortune as a man of prudence should do ; and his wife is not in want of any thing ; in proof of which, I give you my three horses, and a trifle every year for your support.

Benj. What me, my dear mistress ? What use can I make of your bounty ? I should only die the sooner, after I received it, in grief for having lost the worthy giver. Never therefore, never——

Mrs. T. I insist on your acceptance of it, for my own, if not your satisfaction. I would willingly be happy at the thought of giving you peace and comfort in your old age. Go then, my friend ; you will distress me, should you stay a minute longer.

Benj. Let me wish you, at least, a thousand blessings. I am old ; yet, were I younger, should not have sufficient time to weep for having lost you.

SCENE III.

In the Parlour of Mrs. Villars.

Enter Mrs. Torrington, in disguise, under the feigned name of Lambert.

Mrs. T. Pardon me, madam, the liberty of this intrusion. I have been informed that you desire a governess for three young ladies. Though I am

far from thinking that I have all the necessary qualifications for such an arduous undertaking, yet my situation induces me to beg that you will have the goodness to make trial of me.

Mrs. V. May I ask you, madam, who you are, and your name ?

Mrs. T. Lambert, madam ; I am the unhappy widow of a man whom I loved, and still love better than myself. In the affliction that besets me, I should look upon it as a consolation, could I fill up my time with the education of your young ladies ; I beg you, madam, to bestow this favor on me, if you have not yet engaged any one. I dare persuade myself you will be satisfied with my solicitude to please. I desire no salary. I am above the possibility of want. It is only employment I request, to drive away the thought of my misfortunes.

Mrs. V. Your motive is so affecting, that it interests me in your favor. You have then no children ?

Mrs. T. I had three, who constituted all my hope and satisfaction ; but, alas ! cruel fortune has deprived me of them.

Mrs. V. I sincerely pity you ! You seem a very tender mother ; and deserve that they should have lived to recompense your feeling and affection.

Mrs. T. Ah, madam ! they are still living. But, on that account, however strange my story, not less lost to me.

Mrs. V. I cannot comprehend you ; either your affliction has impaired your understanding, or you stifle in your heart some very great misfortune.

Would you fear to trust me with it ? Possibly, I might be able to afford you some consolation.

Mrs. T. Yes ; you only can afford me consolation.

Mrs. V. What ! I alone ? Let me know then what I can do for you ? There is nothing that I would not cheerfully perform to comfort you.

Mrs. T. Make me governess of your young ladies.

Mrs. V. Is that all ?

Mrs. T. I have nothing else to ask ; but, if you grant this, it will render me happy.

Mrs. V. I cannot express my astonishment at your words. This conversation is in some sort like a vision. Though you do not think me worthy of your confidence, I feel a desire to give you mine. I will bring in the young ladies. Will you undergo a slight examination of your abilities to discharge the employment you solicit ? If, as I have not a doubt, you justify the idea I have formed concerning you, I promise to intrust you with their education.

Mrs. T. O my noble benefactress ! then I have your promise ?

Mrs. V. Yes ; on such conditions as I have stated.

Mrs. T. I desire no better ; and, thank heaven and you, I have recovered my three children !

Mrs. V. Your three children, madam ! What three children ?

Mrs. T. Those which you have undertaken to protect, the three Misses Torrington. You see before you their unhappy, but guiltless mother, whom her husband has parted from them. I have left my property, and disguised my name and circumstan-

ces, to obtain an introduction to my children. I was fearful of discovering who I was, till I had obtained your promise. I am sensible my husband has written to you about something which he fancies I have done amiss ; but my present conduct, I dare persuade myself, has already proved how innocent I must be of his accusation. A good mother cannot be a wicked wife.

Mrs. V. [embracing her.] O, most affectionate and courageous woman ! I want words to show my joy and admiration. I could never have believed that Mrs. Torrington was hidden beneath this sorrowful disguise.

Mrs. T. The metamorphosis has not been painful to me ; and, in future, I am determined to support it. No one, madam, except yourself, shall ever be acquainted who I am. Confide upon my promise. By whatsoever you conceive most sacred, not a word shall escape me to reveal the secret.

Mrs. V. And on my part, I promise similar discretion. But your daughters ?

Mrs. T. I shall find it a hard task to keep myself, as it were, a stranger to them, and suppress the feelings of motherly affection. But no other way is left me. Only aid me, madam, while I personate my part. As soon as the deception is established, it will support itself. I should be quite without anxiety on this head, were it not for my eldest daughter Harriet. She, I am afraid, will know me. I must, however, persevere in the pious imposition.

Mrs. V. I can bear this scene or delay the introduction of your children no longer.

[She goes out, and almost instantly returns, leading Harriet and her sisters, who all curtsy to Mrs. Torrington, considering her with great attention and embarrassment.]

Mrs. V. My dear little girls, I have brought you to see this lady, whom I have chosen as your governess. I dare engage you will be happy under her. I think I may assure you of her care and friendship ; and expect that you, on your part, will obey and love her, just as if you thought her your mother.

Har. [*falling into her arms.*] It is our mother ! It is she herself !

Soph. and Car. Mother ! mother ! you have returned then ? [*They all cling to her, but she maintains a reserved and serious countenance.*]

Mrs. V. I thought you would all be much deceived. I had myself the same idea of the lady. I fancied, I know not why, that she was your mother.

Har. And so she is ; my heart informs me so, as truly as my eyes.

Soph. And have you brought me any thing ?

Car. Ay, where is the doll that you promised me, mother ? Pray let me have it.

Mrs. T. My dear little ladies, I am sorry to see you all in such an error. You know that your mother is a great way off.

Har. No, no ; you are our dear mother. We cannot be deceived. You have not such a charming dress as she wears, but you have her face, and her shape, and her sweet voice.

Mrs. T. Is it possible I should resemble your mother so much ? If so, I am very glad, on your account, as well as my own ; it will make us better friends ; will it not, young ladies ? I dare say you begin to love me a little already, don't you ?

Soph. O much, much, mother !

Car. And I too. If you did but know——

Har. [weeping.] What have we done, mother, that you should grieve us thus ? that you should tell us you are not our mother ? Yet we are, all of us, your children.

Mrs. V. Come, good madam, you must be what they would have you ; and, since they resolve to call you mother, take that name upon you ; it will give them pleasure. And, young ladies, if you like it, you may likewise call *me* mother.

Mrs. T. Well, my dear young ladies, if you wish to make me your mother, I wish it likewise ; and will have as much affection for you, as if I really were so. My dear Harriet, and my dear Sophia, and my dear, sweet, little Caroline. [*She embraces them with transport.*]

Har. How happy we all are, in having our mother again ! we thought continually of you, in your absence ; and did hardly any thing but cry since you first left us.

Mrs. T. [*whispering to Mrs. V.*] I foresaw that Harriet would discover me ; and therefore I must make her of my party, by discovering my intention to her. Be kind enough to take her sisters away for a moment, if you can.

Mrs. V. [*whispering Mrs. T.*] Yes, I understand you. [*To Soph. and Car.*] Come, my little ones, I will let you have the playthings, that your mother, as you will have her called, has brought you.

[*She goes out with Sophia and Caroline.*]

Mrs. T. We are now alone, my dear Harriet ; I may indulge the happiness that I feel in pressing you to my heart.

Har. [*falling into her mother's arms.*] Ah, now you are my good mother indeed. But pray never, for the future, tell us that you are not.

Mrs. T. Be it so, my dearest Harriet ; but there is one thing I insist on, in my turn.

Har. O any thing in the world, mother.

Mrs. T. Then, if you love me, Harriet, do not tell any one that I am your mother. Call me only *Mrs. Lambert* ; you understand. It is of the greatest consequence to my affairs ; and, for a reason which I have not time to tell you now, it is absolutely necessary that I should be unknown.

Har. How, would you have me cease to call you my mother ? you that I love so much ?

Mrs. T. And do you think that my love considers it less painful, to deny myself the only name which can at all times make me happy ?

Har. Well then, I obey ; but, every time it comes not from my lips when I am speaking to you, suppose me to pronounce in my heart.

LETTER IV.

TO MR. TORRINGTON.

DEAR FATHER,

I have so many things to write to you, that I cannot tell which of them should begin my letter. We are no longer at Mrs. Villars's house, but at that of our governess, Mrs. Lambert ; it is in Circus place, and a very pleasant situation. You cannot possibly conceive how pleased we all of us are with our governess. She is such a charming woman ! quite as kind as our mother ! She loves us just as if we were her children, and we love her just as if she were our mother ! There is no need of sending your money to have masters come to teach us ; she knows every thing that we ought to learn. You would imagine she considered it her happiness to teach us ; and she does it in so kind and patient a manner, that we are all delighted to be instructed by her. Mrs. Lambert has paid so much attention to Sophia and little Caroline, that they now read most charmingly ! As for me, I have begun a course of geography and history with her ; this, with a little ciphering, and a few choice pieces in verse and prose, which I take care to learn by heart, and recite to her, employs our morning. In the afternoon, for the sake of recreation, I go to drawing, dancing, and the the piano ; and, when evening comes, take my needle, at the use of which you cannot imagine how clever Mrs. Lambert is ; and lastly, to complete myself in ciphering, and acquire a little

knowledge of the expenses of housekeeping, she gives me all the bills to overlook, and makes me set down every little sum of money that she expends. By these means I begin to know the price of many things, and, as she tells me, may become your little stewardess when I return home. With so much on my hands to do all day, you will perhaps imagine that I am tired at night ; but I am never weary, father. I am happy, on the contrary, to think that, with her assistance, I have so well filled up my time ; and should have reason to complain, if any one deprived me of such charming occupations.

I have played a little trick on Mrs. Lambert, and mean to tell you what it is. She went the other day with Caroline to visit Mrs. Villars, and left me at home with Sophia. I thought it would divert my sister if I read a little ; so I took up a book, called the *Theatre of Education*, from the French, and read the *Poor Blind Woman*. I could not refrain from crying very much ; but, to my great disappointment, Sophia did not. This quite vexed me, as you may easily imagine ; upon which I pinched her, that she might cry and keep me company. She cried indeed, and more a great deal than I wanted her to do. At last I appeased her, after many kisses and caresses, but was angry with myself for having hurt her. I suppose some idea or object took off her attention while I read, and naturally thought that she would be really affected, could she read the piece herself ; with this

intention, I formed a plan of putting her to con this charming piece in private, till she could read it perfectly ; and Mrs. Lambert could not refrain last night from wondering at the progress which she had made. We did not let her know our secret, but purpose to catch her in the same manner again with Caroline. I am quite rejoiced that we can have these opportunities of pleasing her, for all the trouble which she is every moment taking upon our account.

These, dear father, are our amusements and our studies ; to which, if you add our walks about the place, our visits to a few poor people near us, whom we now and then assist with clothes and money, and our labors in a little garden, where we tend our flowers, you will have the history of our time at large. We were never so well in health as now, and never so happy ; we want nothing except the pleasure of your company. If you would only take a journey down to Bath, I would give every thing in the world that you might see this Mrs. Lambert. I am sure, no woman breathing would prove worthier of your friendship. O come, come, father !

But, you must know, I have Caroline at present at my elbow, and she asks me if I am writing to you. She is so proud of having scrawled these few days past what she calls letters, in a copy-book which Mrs. Lambert has made her, that she says she too will scribble you a line or two. It will be a charming hodge-podge, I foresee, of great and

little letters, and fine spelling, if she sets about it ; but no matter, I must please her. She has a pen in hand already, and is groping in the standish for ink. She is now tugging me this very moment by the apron to leave off, and give up my seat. Adieu then, dear father. My governess desires me to present you her respects. Sophia's duty to you, and mine also. I am, &c.

HARRIET TORRINGTON.

LETTER V.

TO MR. TORRINGTON.

SIR,

You remember the punishment to which you said you would submit, if a woman could be found completely fitted to undertake the education of a child, its mother excepted. I have met with one, whose qualifications for the education of your children are even greater than your wishes ; and with justice I might claim the full performance of your promise upon your head, and expect that you should set out for Bath. Lay aside your fears, however ; I will not abuse my power, but show you no less mercy than the confidence which you have reposed in me. I claim one sole condition or request as a friend, and that is, to come down as soon as possible. Do not ask what reason I have for this abrupt request, as you shall know it when you are here. You have only to set out, and that immediately,

unless you wish me to repent that I have taken such concern in your affairs. Yours, faithfully.

HORTENSIA VILLARS.

P.S. Harriet begs me to inclose my note within her letter, so that you may read hers first.

LETTER VI.

TO MRS. VILLARS.

MY DEAR AND VALUED FRIEND,

I pay obedience to your letter and leave town immediately, as you enjoin me ; so that this reply will not have reached you six hours before you see me. In reality I wish to have it go beforehand, and in some sort spare my tongue the shame of revealing what it is to tell you. Shall I even have sufficient courage thus to let you know my situation ? but justice demands it ; and I merit my humiliation. Well then, know, madam, that I have shown myself the most unjust and cruel of all husbands ! I have dared to disparage the unspotted virtue of my Amelia with my scandalous suspicions ; of my Amelia, I repeat, whose very looks I am now unworthy to meet. It was when I most insulted her that she was most studious to preserve my name from ignominy. One of my relations, a young man whom I patronized, was on the point of being utterly disgraced among his brother officers, for certain youthful levities which he durst not communicate to me. acquainted as he was with my impatient temper.

It was she who, with the fruits of her economy, delivered him from the dishonor that he was going to bring both upon himself and me. She had sufficient strength of mind to bear with my unworthy treatment and aspersions, rather than expose him to my indignation by revealing his delinquency. I have discovered very recently this motive for those secret interviews which so disturbed my mind, and am now lamenting with remorse my detested jealousy. But how shall I endure her presence? At her feet I will implore her pardon. I am posting to that quarter where she has fixed her retirement; fortunately I must pass through Bath to reach it. I shall see you by the way, and kiss my almost orphan little ones. Farewell! I dare not sign a name which my jealousy has made criminal.

SCENE IV.

Mrs. Villars, Mr. Torrington, Harriet, Sophia, Caroline.

Har. So, father, you are pleased with what we have told you?

Soph. And think us very much improved?

Mr. T. Yes, my children, I am charmed with every thing I have seen!

Car. As well as with the little letter of my writing? Was it not quite pretty?

Mr. T. Admirable! like yourself, my little Caroline! But where is your worthy governess? I wish to see and thank her.

Mrs. V. I see her coming this way. We will leave you with her. Come, my dears ; come with me.
[She goes out with the children.]

Enter Mrs. Torrington.

Mr. T. [*advancing towards her.*] Madam, let me ask your pardon !—But—whose features do I see ? Who is this ?

Mrs. T. Well, sir, what causes this confusion ? Are you surprised that I have the care and education of your children ?

Mr. T. Surprised ! Nothing in you ever should have made me wonder had I but deserved the happiness of knowing you. My Amelia !

Mrs. T. Why bestow that name on me ? I have put it off.

Mr. T. You have, indeed ; and therefore, kneeling at your feet, I implore you to resume it.

Mrs. T. What would you do, sir ?

Mr. T. If you would not behold me die,—one word ;—one single word !—one of those sweetly sounding accents that were wont to make me happy !

Mrs. T. Well then, dearest husband, come to the embrace of your Amelia, who still loves you.

Mr. T. It is too much !—Too much !—I ask not for such a blessing !—Tell me only that you have ceased to hate me.

Mrs. T. It should be my punishment to ask your pardon, could such hatred ever come into my heart ! Speak only of my happiness ; I think of nothing in

the world but *yours*. Come then, and let us be happy in the conversation of our children.

LETTER VII.

TO MRS. VILLARS.

DEAR MADAM,

I leave Bath with every sense of gratitude which the services I have experienced from your friendship inspire, and fly to London, where I mean to furnish a new house for my Amelia. She will follow me some few days hence, and bring the children with her. I hope you, madam, will also come and take your portion in the happiness you have restored to, &c.

ARTHUR TORRINGTON.

LETTER VIII.

MY DEAR HUSBAND,

Instead of seeing me or any of the children, you will have a letter full of tears and lamentation. On the day after your departure, Harriet and Sophia complained of being feverish, and were attacked with such a headache that they could not possibly keep up. We put them therefore immediately to bed. Towards evening, Caroline made the same complaint. All three are now quite covered with a very thick small-pox, of such a sort as I am told is very virulent. I must forget that I never had this dreadful malady myself. All night, as well

as day, I keep my station by their bed, and every moment fear they will be suffocated. I have felt already a lassitude and heat in every limb ; but my affection renders me stronger than I should be otherwise. Their love and tenderness sustain my courage. I perceive that, in the height of all their sufferings, they refrain, as much as possible, from complaint, for fear of giving me uneasiness. In the delirium of their fever, they pronounce your name and mine, with tones of voice so moving, that they cannot be expressed ; and no later than this morning, Caroline desired to see you. I replied that I could not send to London for you, lest you should catch her illness. “ O no, mother,” said she, “ do not be afraid, I’ll keep it all to myself !” ‘ My child,’ replied I, ‘ you might communicate the infection to him, without losing it yourself.’ “ So much the worse,” said Caroline, and fainted with weakness ; but, soon after coming to herself, she called me, saying, “ Dear mother, you have the picture of father about your neck ; pray let me kiss it ! There is no fear, I suppose, that *this* will catch the small-pox from me.”——Dearest children ! should I lose you ! Should I perhaps——I see about me the presages of a dreadful separation ! Arm yourself with resolution, my dear husband ! our life in this world is but for a moment. Harriet is afraid lest my letter should afflict you, and requests, with tears, that I would permit her writing something to console you. I am afraid such an effort may exhaust her, but

more fearful to afflict her by a refusal ; I am, therefore, giving her my letter, and her trembling hand writes this :

" My Dear Father,

" We are all three extremely ill ; but yet that is nothing, so do not grieve yourself. I hope——"

She cannot write another word. I find my strength forsake me too. I am seized all over with pain. I hear Sophia groan, and must go to her succour. Farewell, dearest friend ! Take hope ; or arm yourself with fortitude of mind in this distress, as possibly it may be needful. But particularly, whether life or death ensue, love always your

AMELIA TORRINGTON.

LETTER IX.

TO MR. TORRINGTON.

DEAR FRIEND,

How shall I express the melancholy news of which, notwithstanding its unwelcomeness, you must be acquainted ! Try to divine the matter ; for my trembling hand hesitates to write it. Caroline still lives : but Harriet and Sophia—they, alas ! are in the land of spirits. Your unhappy wife, as you may easily suppose, was overwhelmed beneath this two-fold loss ; for grief and watching so depressed her, that the infection which she

received soon brought her to the last extremity. Believe me, my dear friend, I would have bought her life, could I have done so, with the half of my own ! But what avail these empty wishes ? I can keep the fatal secret no longer. At this moment they are tolling for her funeral. She was unable to survive her children many hours. If you had flown to see her once again, you would not have known her, so much had the violence of the disorder changed her features ! I was with her constantly. I did not leave her bed a moment. I received her parting sighs, and closed her eyelids. It was altogether such a scene as will forever live in my mind. I shall find it difficult to represent her fortitude and resignation to God's will. It was not for herself that she sorrowed ; her last words were a fervent supplication in behalf of Caroline and you. What consolation can I give you for her loss, of which my heart has not as great a need as yours ? She alone can soften your affliction. Read the inclosed, of which she wrote the first eight lines, and with a faltering accent dictated the rest. I join my voice to hers ; and in the ardor of friendship, turn your recollection to the child that is still left you ; and to whom you now owe, more than ever, all the love and tenderness that a father can show. I will send her to you, when she is perfectly recovered. Her endearing manner will console you, and her education occupy your mind, which otherwise might yield to painful recollections. God be with you !

I regret that I have nothing to offer but the melancholy language of condolence. Yours,

HORTENSIA VILLARS.

LETTER X.

TO MR. TORRINGTON.

DEAREST HUSBAND,

I find myself expiring. I am going to my children, who, I imagine to myself, are holding out their arms that I should follow them; and we shall rest together in one tomb. Your life is mine. I give it my surviving infant. Caroline is left to represent me. Show her all your tenderness. Be her support; and may *she* prove your consolation! Life is short, and you will both ere long rejoin us, when we shall not fear a further separation. Think not of my death so much, as of the happy place where I shall wait your coming. What I was in this life, I will still continue in another, your

AMELIA.

THE SWORD.

A DRAMA, IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS.

LORD ONSBURGH.
AUGUSTUS, *his Son.*
HENRIETTA, *his Daughter.*
CRAPE, *his Servant,*

FRANK RAYNTON,
WILLIAM RAYNTON,
EDWARD DUDLEY,
CHARLES DUDLEY, *his Friends.*

*SCENE, *an apartment of Lord Onsburgh's House.*

SCENE I. *Augustus.*



HA ! this is my birth-day ! They did well to tell me, otherwise I should never have thought of it. Well, it will bring me some new present from father. But, let's think what will he give me ? Crape had something under his coat when he went into father's room. He would not let me go in with him. If I were not obliged to appear a little more sedate than usual, I should have forced him to show me what he was carrying. But hist, I shall soon know it. Here comes my father.

Enter Lord Onsburch, holding in his hands a sword and belt.

Lord O. Ah ! are you there, Augustus ? I have already wished you joy of your birth-day ; but that is not enough, is it ?

Aug. O father—but what have you in your hand there ?

Lord O. Something that I fear will not become you well. Look here ; a sword !

Aug. What ! is it for me ? O give it me, dear father ; I will be *so* good and *so* diligent for the future——

Lord O. Ah ! if I thought that ! but do you know that a sword requires a man ? That he must be no longer a child who wears one, but should conduct himself with circumspection and decency ; and in short, that it is not the sword which adorns the man, but the man who adorns the sword.

Aug. O never fear me, father. I shall adorn mine, I warrant ! and I'll have nothing to say to those mean persons——

Lord O. Whom do you call mean persons ?

Aug. I mean those who cannot wear a sword ; those who are not of the nobility as you and I are.

Lord O. I know no mean persons, except those who have a wrong way of thinking, and a worse way of conducting themselves ; who are disobedient to their parents, and rude and unmannerly to others ; I therefore see many mean persons a-

mong nobility, and many noble ones among those whom you call mean.

Aug. Yes, I think in the same manner.

Lord O. What were you saying then just now, about wearing a sword? Do you think the real requisites and advantages of nobility consist in fopperies? They serve to distinguish rank, whenever the world thinks it necessary that rank and office should be distinguished. But the most elevated rank only adds more disgrace to the man who is unworthy of the station.

Aug. So I believe, father. But it will be no disgrace to me to have a sword, and to wear it.

Lord O. No. I mean, that you will render yourself worthy of this distinction no otherwise than by your good behavior. Here is your sword, but remember——

Aug. O yes, father.

[He endeavors to put the sword by his side, but cannot succeed. Lord O. assists him to buckle it.]

Lord O. Eh! why it does not fit so bad.

Aug. Does it not? O, I knew that.

Lord O. It becomes you surprisingly. But, above all things, remember what I told you. Good by! [*Going out; he returns.*] I had forgot. I have just sent for your little party of friends to spend the day with you. Observe to behave yourself suitably.

Aug. Yes, father.

[*Exit Lord O.*]

[Augustus struts up and down the room, now and then looking back to see if his sword is behind him.]

Aug. This is fine ! this is being something like a gentleman ! let any one of your citizens come in my way now. No more familiarity, if they do not wear a sword : and, if they take it amiss—Aha !—out with my rapier. But hold ! let us see first if it have a good blade. [*drawing his sword and using violent gestures.*] What ! does that tradesman mean to affront me ?—One—two !—Ah, you defend yourself, do you ?—Die, scoundrel !

Enter Henrietta.

Hen. [*screams on hearing these last words.*] Bless me, Augustus ! are you mad ?

Aug. Is it you, sister ?

Hen. Yes, you see it is. But what do you do with that instrument ? [*pointing to the sword.*]

Aug. Do with it ? What a gentleman should do.

Hen. And who is he that you are going to send out of the world ?

Aug. The first who shall dare take the wall of me !

Hen. I see there are many lives in danger. And if I should happen to be the person——

Aug. You ?—I would not advise you. You see I wear a sword now. Father made me a present of it.

Hen. I suppose, in order to go and kill people, right or wrong.

Aug. An't I the honorable ? If they do not give me the respect due, smack, a box on the ear ; and, if your little commoner will continue impertinent—sword in hand—[*going to draw it.*]

Hen. O leave it in quiet, brother. And, lest I

should run the risk of affronting you unknowingly, I wish to be informed what respect you demand ?

Aug. You shall soon see. My father has sent for some of my young acquaintance. If those little puppies do not behave themselves respectfully, you shall see how I will manage.

Hen. Very well ; but I ask you what we must do to behave ourselves respectfully towards you ?

Aug. In the first place I insist upon a very low bow.

Hen. [*with affected gravity, making him a low curtsy.*] Your lordship's most humble servant. Was that well ?

Aug. No joking, Henrietta, if you please, or else—

Hen. Nay, I am quite serious, I assure you. We must take care to know and perform our duty to respectable persons. It would not be amiss likewise to inform your little friends.

Aug. O, I will have some sport with those fellows ; give one a pull, t'other a pitch, and play all sorts of tricks upon them.

Hen. Those, I take it, are some of the duties of a gentleman who wears a sword ; but, if those fellows should not like the sport, and return it on the gentleman's ears——

Aug. What ! low, vulgar blood ? No, they have neither hearts nor swords.

Hen. Really, father could not have given you a more useful present. He saw plainly that a hero was concealed in the person of his son, and that he wanted but a sword to show him in his proper light.

Aug. Hark ye, sister ! it is my birth-day, we

must divert ourselves. However, you will not say any thing about it to father.

Hen. Why not ? He would not have given you a sword, if he did not expect some exploit of this sort from a gentleman newly equipped. Would he have advised you otherwise ?

Aug. Certainly ; you know that he is always preaching to me.

Hen. What has he now been preaching about ?

Aug. I don't know, not I. That I should adorn my sword, and not my sword me.

Hen. In that case you understood him properly, I must say. To adorn one's sword is to know how to make use of it ; and you are willing to show already that you possess this knowledge.

Aug. Very well, sister ! you think to joke ; but I would have you to know, madam——

Hen. O, I know extremely well, all that you can tell me ; but do you know, that there is one principal ornament wanting to your sword ?

Aug. What is that ? [*unbuckles the belt, and looks all over the sword.*] I do not see that there is the least thing wanting.

Hen. Really, you are a very clever swordsman. Only a sword-knot, now ! How a blue and silver knot would dangle from that hilt !

Aug. You are right, Henrietta. Hark ye ! you have a whole band-box full of ribands in your room ; so——

Hen. I was thinking of it ; provided that you

do not give me a specimen of your fencing, or lay your blade about me in return.

Aug. Nonsense ! here is my hand, that is enough, you have nothing to fear. But quick, a handsome knot ! when my little party come, they shall see me in all my grandeur.

Hen. Give it to me, then.

Aug. [*giving her the sword.*] There, make haste ! you will leave it in my room, on the table, that I may find it when I want it.

Hen. Depend on me.

Enter Crape.

Crape. The two master Dudleys and the master Rayntons are below.

Aug. Well ! can't they come up ? Must I go to receive them at the bottom of the stairs ?

Crape. My lady ordered me to tell you to come and meet them.

Aug. No ; it is better to wait for them here.

Hen. Nay, since mother desires that you will go down——

Aug. Indeed, they are worth all that ceremony ! Well, I shall go directly. Come, what are you doing ? Will this make my sword-knot ? Go, run, and let me find it on my table properly done. [*going out.*] Do you hear ? [*Exit.*

Hen. The little insolent ! in what a tone he speaks to me ! luckily I have the sword. A proper instrument indeed in the hands of so quarrelsome a boy ! yes, wait till I return it to you.

My father does not know you as well as I do. But he must be told. Ah, here he is !

Enter Lord Onsburch.

You have come in good time, father. I was going to you.

Lord O. What have you of importance to tell me ? But what do you with your brother's sword ?

Hen. I promised him to put a handsome knot to it ; but it was only to get this dangerous weapon out of his hands. Don't give it to him again, father.

Lord O. Why should I take back a present which I have given him ?

Hen. At least be so good as to keep it until he becomes more peaceable. I just now found him all alone, laying about him like Don Quixote, and threatening to make his first trial of fencing upon his companions that come to see him.

Lord O. The little quarreller ! If he will thus use it for his first exploits, they shall not turn out to his honor, I promise you. Give me the sword.

Hen. [*giving him the sword.*] There, sir ; I hear him on the stairs.

Lord O. Run, make the sword-knot, and bring it to me when it is ready. [*They go out.*]

SCENE II.

Augustus, Edward and Charles Dudley, Frank and William Raynton.

[*Augustus enters first with his hat on ; the others follow him uncovered.*]

Edw. [*aside to Frank.*] This is a very polite reception !

Frank. [*aside to Edw.*] I suppose it is the fashion to receive company with the hat on, and to walk before them in your own house.

Aug. What are you mumbling there ?

Ed. Nothing, Mr. Onsburch ; nothing.

Aug. Is it something that I should not hear ?

Frank. Perhaps it may be.

Aug. Now I insist upon knowing it.

Frank. When you have a right to demand it.

Ed. Softly, Raynton, it does not become us in a strange house——

Frank. It is still less becoming to be impolite in one's *own* house.

Aug. [*haughtily.*] Impolite ! I impolite ! Is it because I walked before you ?

Frank. That is the very reason. Whenever we have the honor to receive your visits, or those of any other person, we never take the precedence, nor assume any superiority.

Aug. You do your duty. But from you to me——

Frank. Well, what from you to me ?——

Aug. Are you noble ?

Frank. [*to the two Dudleys and his brother.*] Let us leave him to himself, with his nobility, if you will take my advice.

Ed. Fie, Mr. Onsburch ! if you think it beneath your dignity to keep company with us, why invite us here ? we did not ask that honor.

Aug. It was not I who invited you, but my father.

Frank. Then we will go to my lord, and thank

W

him for his civility. At the same time we shall let him know that his son thinks it a dishonor to receive us. Come, brother.

Aug. [stopping him.] You cannot take a joke, Raynton. I am very happy to see you. It was to do me a pleasure that father invited you, for this is my birth-day. I beg you will stay with me.

Frank. This is another affair. But be more polite another time. Though I have not a title as you have, yet I will not suffer any one to offend me without resenting it.

Ed. Be quiet, Frank ; we should be good friends.

Ch. This then is your birth-day, Mr. Onsburch ?

Ed. I wish you many happy returns of it ?

Frank. So do I, sir ; and all manner of prosperity ; [*aside*] and particularly that you may grow a little more condescending.

Wil. I suppose you have had handsome presents.

Aug. Of course.

Ch. A plenty of cakes and sweetmeats, no doubt ?

Aug. Ha ! ha ! cakes ? that would be pretty indeed. I have them every day.

Wil. Ah then, I'll wager, it is in money. Two or three crowns ? ha ?

Aug. [disdainfully.] Something better, and which I alone, of all here—yes, I alone, have a right to wear. [*Frank and Edward talk aside.*]

Wil. If I had what has been given you, perhaps I could wear it as well as another.

Aug. [looking at him with an air of contempt.] Poor creature ! [*To the two elder boys.*] What, are

you both whispering there again ? I think you should assist to amuse me.

Ed. Only furnish us with the means.

Frank. He who receives friends should study their amusement.

Aug. What do you mean by that, Mr. Raynton ?

Enter Henrietta, bringing a plate with cakes.

Frank. Much at your service, miss. [*bowing.*]

Ed. We are happy to see you, miss, among our party.

Hen. Sir, you are very obliging.—[*To Aug.*] Brother, mother has sent you this, in order to entertain your friends, until the chocolate is ready. Crape will bring it up presently, and I shall have the pleasure of helping you.

Frank. You will do us great honor, miss.

Aug. We do not want you here ! But, now I think of it ; my sword-knot !

Hen. You will find the sword and the knot in your room. Good by, gentlemen, till I see you again.

Frank. Shall we soon have the favor of your company, miss ?

Hen. I am going to ask leave of my mother. [*Exit.*]

Aug. [*sitting down.*] Come, take chairs, and sit down.

[*They look at each other, and sit down without speaking. Augustus helps the two youngest, and then himself, so plentifully, that nothing remains for the two eldest.*]

Stop a moment ! They will bring in more, and then I'll give you some.

Frank. O no ; we do not desire it.

Aug. O, with all my heart !

Ed. If this be the politeness of a young nobleman——

Aug. Is it with such as you that one must stand upon ceremony ? I told you before that they will bring us up something else. You may take it when it comes, or not take it ; you perfectly understand that ?

Frank. Yes ; that is plain enough ; and we see plainly too in what company we are.

Ed. Are you going to begin your quarrels again ? Mr. Onsburch, Raynton, fie !

[Augustus rises, all the rest rise also.]

Aug. [going up to the elder Raynton.] In what company are you then, my little cit ?

Frank. [firmly.] With a young nobleman who is very rude and very impudent ; who values himself more than he ought ; and who does not know how well-bred people should behave to each other.

Ed. We are all of the same opinion.

Aug. I rude and impudent ? Tell me so, who am a gentleman ?

Frank. Yes, I say it again ; very rude, and very impudent ; and should tell you so, although you were a duke, or a prince,

Aug. [striking him.] I'll teach you to whom you are talking.

[Frank tries to lay hold of him. Augustus slips back, goes out, and shuts the door.]

SCENE III.

The two Rayntons and the two Dudleys.

Ed. Bless me, Raynton, what have you done ? He will go to his father, and tell a thousand stories. What will he think of us ?

Frank. His father is a man of honor, I will go to him, if Augustus do not. He has not invited us purposely to be ill-treated by his son.

Ch. He will send us home, and make a complaint against us.

Wil. No ; my brother behaved himself properly. My father will approve what he has done, when we tell him the whole. He does not understand having his children ill-used.

Frank. Come with me. Let us all go and find Lord Onsburch.

Enter Augustus with his sword undrawn.

[The two younger boys run, one into a corner, and the other behind an arm-chair. Frank and Edward stand firm.]

Aug. [*going up to Frank.*] Now I'll teach you, you little insolent.

[Draws, and, instead of a blade, finds a turkey's long tail-feather. He stands still in confusion. The younger boys burst into a loud laugh, and come forward.]



Frank. Come on ! Let us feel the temper of your sword.

Ed. Do not add to his confusion. He only deserves contempt.

Wil. Aha ! this was it, then, which you had a right to wear !

Ch. He will not do any mighty harm to any body with that terrible weapon.

Frank. I could punish you now for your rudeness, but I should blush to take such revenge.

Ed. He is no longer worthy of our company. Let us leave him to himself.

Wil. Good by to you, Knight of the Turkey's Feather !

Ch. We shall not come here again, until you are disarmed, for you are too terrible now.

[As they are going out, Frank stops them.]

Frank. Let us stay, and give an account of our conduct to his father, otherwise appearances will be against us.

Ed. You are right. What would he think of us, were to leave his house thus, without seeing him ?

Enter Lord Onsburgh.

[They all assume an air of respect at the entrance of lord Onsburgh. Augustus goes aside and cries.]

Lord O. [to Augustus, looking at him with indignation.] What is this confusion, sir, that I hear ?

[Augustus sobs, and cannot speak.]

Frank. My lord, you will pardon the disturbance that appears among us. It was not caused by us. From the first moment of our coming, Mr. Onsburgh received us so ill——

Lord O. Do not be uneasy, my dear little friend. I know all. I was in the next room, and could hear, from the beginning, my son's unbecoming discourse. He is the more blameable, as he had just been making me the fairest promises. I have suspected his impertinence for a long time, but I wished to witness myself, how far he was capable of carrying it ; and, for fear of mischief, I

put a blade to his sword, which, as you see, will not spill much blood.

[The children burst into a laugh.

Frank. Excuse the freedom, my lord, which I took, in telling him the truth a little bluntly.

Lord O. I rather owe you many thanks for it. You are an excellent young gentleman, and deserve, much better than he does, to wear this badge of honor. As a token of my esteem and acknowledgement, accept this sword ; but I will first put a blade to it which may be more worthy of you.

Frank. Your lordship is too good ; but allow us now to withdraw. Our company may not be agreeable to Mr. Onsburch to-day.

Lord O. No, no ; my dear boys, you shall stay. My son's presence shall not disturb your pleasure. You may divert yourselves together, and my daughter shall take care to provide you with whatever may amuse you. Come with me into another apartment. As for you, sir, [*to Augustus*] do not stir from this room. You may celebrate your birth-day here alone ; and you shall never wear a sword again, until you deserve one.

END OF VOL. I.

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